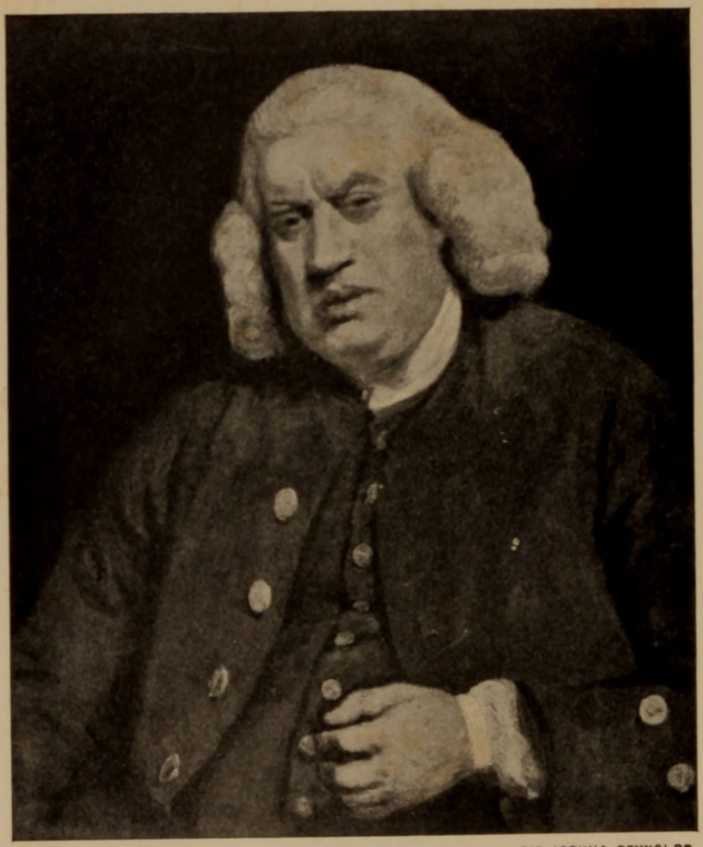
LIFE OF JOHNSON

by MACAULAY

Edited by A. P. Walker



SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

SAMUEL JOHNSON
1709–1784

Heath's English Classics

MACAULAY'S

LIFE OF JOHNSON

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION, NOTES, ETC.

BY

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"*Biography is, of the various kinds of narrative writing, that which is most eagerly read, and most easily applied to the purposes of life.*" — JOHNSON.

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PREFACE.

THIS book, like its predecessors by the same editor, is designed to aid both teacher and pupil to study Macaulay's *Life of Johnson* in a way that shall be pleasant and profitable. To that end it endeavors to economize for both the mechanical labor that is not really disciplinary. This latter end is sought by furnishing (1) a connected sketch of the historical events to which Macaulay refers, and (2) an explanatory index of all allusions which may possibly excite the reader's curiosity. The editor has avoided putting this material into the form of notes, because he believes that historical matters should be studied in their historical relations, and that incidental allusions should not be allowed to distract the attention of the reader. Pupils should not spend their time in tracing allusions which do not really aid the thought in the text; but they should be taught never to rest satisfied until the text itself is absolutely clear. Of all forms of investigation they should prefer the reading of works to which Macaulay refers.

The study of the marginal topical analysis is exceedingly important, both because it enables the pupil to carry the entire biography in his memory, and because it furnishes him a model for similar work of his own. Macaulay is notable for the orderly arrangement of his materials and for his clear and connected treatment of them. By observation of this arrangement and treatment, the pupil will inevitably gain in the power to construct and to develop an extended composition. It is useful for him to learn the facts regarding Johnson's life and works, but it is much more useful for him to learn to think coherently and to express his thought in a clear and orderly manner.

The editor desires to express his great indebtedness to his former pupil, Mr. Hyman Askowith, whose unremitting industry, skill in

research, and familiarity with his methods and with his other books in this series, have enabled him to render invaluable assistance in the preparation of this book. Without that assistance the editor could not have completed the work at this time.

The text is reprinted without change in punctuation or spelling from the authoritative English edition of Macaulay's works.

A. P. W.

BOSTON, May 1, 1903.

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BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE OF MACAULAY'S LIFE AS RELATED TO HIS PRINCIPAL LITERARY WORK.

1800 He was born at Rothley Temple, Leicestershire, England.
25 Oct. His father was of Presbyterian ancestry, his mother a Quaker. In early childhood he was an insatiable reader. After the year

1812 He began his formal education by attending a private academy.

1818 He entered Trinity College, Cambridge, where he won distinction for brilliant work in all studies except mathematics. He was associated with the college for more than seven years (Craven University Scholar, 1821; B.A., 1822; Fellow, 1824). (Contributions to *Knight's Quarterly Magazine*, 1822; *Essay on Milton*, 1825.) Having determined to pursue the profession of law, in

1826 He was called to the bar, but devoted much of his time to literature, as his *Essay on Milton*, contributed to the *Edinburgh Review*, had gained him instant popularity. To that magazine he contributed regularly for several years. (*Essays on Machiavelli*, 1827; *Dryden*, January, 1828; *History*, May, 1828; *Hallam's History*, September, 1828, etc.)

1830 He entered Parliament as a Whig member for Calne, on the nomination of Lord Lansdowne. He immediately became an ardent advocate of political reforms, and added to his reputation as a writer that of an orator. His literary activity was not diminished by his new duties (*Essays on Bunyan*, December, 1830; *Byron*, June, 1831; *Johnson*, September, 1831; *Mirabeau*, July, 1832; *Walpole*, October, 1833, etc.), while his political services to the cause of

reform won him the suffrages of the city of Leeds in the elections of 1832, and the gratitude of the Whig leaders.

1833 He was made Secretary of the Board of Control. In the same year his speech on a Bill for the Government of India proved his exhaustive acquaintance with the conditions and needs of that country. Accordingly he was appointed a member of the Supreme Council of India and its legal adviser, at a salary of £10,000 a year.

1834 He went to India in this capacity, and devoted his powers to solving administrative problems and to formulating a Code of Laws for India, his literary gifts meanwhile finding but little expression. (*Essays on Mackintosh's History*, 1835; *Bacon*, 1837.) Having saved from his ample income a sum sufficient to relieve him from anxiety for the future, in

1838 He returned to England, and was soon elected to Parliament as a member for Edinburgh.

1839 He became Secretary at War in the ministry of Lord Melbourne. On the accession to power of the Tories in

1841 He became an active member of the Opposition to Peel. He resumed his frequent contributions to the *Edinburgh Review*. (*Essays on Clive*, 1840; *Leigh Hunt, Lord Holland, Hastings*, 1841; *Frederick the Great*, 1842; *Madame D'Arblay, Addison*, 1843, etc.) Meanwhile he tempted fortune in a new line of literary activity (*Lays of Ancient Rome*, 1842), and also prepared the first collected edition of his *Essays* (1843).

1846 He became Paymaster of the Forces in the new Whig ministry of Russell. In the election of the succeeding year, he was rejected by the voters of Edinburgh because of his independent attitude on religious and other questions. This defeat left him free to prosecute the work which he had long designed to make the crowning literary production of his life, the *History of England from the Accession of James II.* (Vols. I. and II., 1848).

1852 He was reëlected Member of Parliament for Edinburgh without any canvass on his own behalf, but resigned his seat four years later, as the completion of his *History* was still

his foremost consideration (Vols. III. and IV., 1855), and his failing health warned him that he must set a limit to his activities. In recognition of his services to the state in so many fields of labor, in

1857 He was elevated to the peerage as "Baron Macaulay of Rothley." Besides his labors upon the *History*, he now found time to contribute to the *Encyclopædia Britannica* a series of biographies of eminent men (*Atterbury*, 1853; *Bunyan*, 1854; *Goldsmith*, *Johnson*, 1856; *William Pitt*, 1859). His health, although failing, gave no serious cause of alarm until in

1859 Dec. 28 He died of disease of the heart, and was buried in the "Poet's Corner" in Westminster Abbey, at the foot of the monument to Addison.

SKETCH OF ENGLISH HISTORY, 1575–1775, AS REFERRED TO IN THIS BIOGRAPHY.

The reign of Elizabeth, the last of the Tudor monarchs of England, was one of the most glorious in its annals. Discoveries in the New World, victories over Spain on the seas, internal prosperity, and, above all, the sudden development of literature, — all lent lustre to the "Elizabethan Age." The English Drama, till then crude and scanty, became notable for both the quantity and the excellence of its productions. Between 1580 and 1596, Marlowe, Kyd, Chettle, Nash, Peele, and Greene all did excellent work, which, however, was somewhat obscured by the wonderful productions of the two master-dramatists, — Shakespeare and "rare Ben Jonson." But an equally rapid decline set in, even during Jonson's life; so that the works of Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger and Ford, Webster and Dekker, — all nearly contemporary with the two masters, — failed to reach an equally high level.

Shakespeare and Ben Jonson.

Among the political changes brought about during Elizabeth's reign was the establishment of the Protestant Episcopal Church as the official religion of the nation. That is, its creed and organization were fixed by Parliament, its government centred in the monarch as its supreme head, its membership in theory included all the citizens of the State, and attendance upon its services was compulsory upon all. The actual work of government was intrusted to bishops ruling over dioceses, and special ecclesiastical courts existed in each diocese for the trial of cases affecting religion or ecclesiastics.

Church and State.

In spite of this legal uniformity there was much difference of religious opinion in England. In particular, many of the clergymen of the Established Church believed that its ritual was too much like that of the Roman Catholic Church, which they de-

nounced as "superstitious." These "Puritans," as they were called, first clamored for a simpler form of worship, and later pressed for the abolition of the episcopal form of government and the substitution of the democratic form of government called Presbyterianism. In this system the churches were self-governed through representative bodies called "Presbyteries," instead of by bishops and other appointive officers.

Presbyterianism.

In 1603 Elizabeth died and was succeeded by her cousin, James Stuart of Scotland. Thenceforth until 1707 the two kingdoms, although having separate constitutions and separate Parliaments, were ruled by the same monarchs. A peculiarity of these Stuart monarchs of England was their adherence to the doctrine of "the divine right of kings." This doctrine, in brief, was that an hereditary monarchy is a divinely instituted form of government; that a monarch is, therefore, responsible to God alone for the way in which he governs his realm; and that, while he should aim to rule solely for the good of his subjects, they have no right to bid defiance to his edicts or to reject him when his government becomes obnoxious to them. An amusing corollary to this theory was the ancient belief that in the touch of a divinely ordained ruler resided a miraculous healing power. For centuries before the accession of James, English monarchs had pretended to cure various diseases, and especially scrofula (thence called the "King's Evil"), by the laying on of hands. (See *Macbeth*, Act IV., Sc. 2.) On the accession of James I. doubt was raised as to whether the power had been transmitted from the English to the Scotch royal line, but James asserted that it had been so transmitted, and the practice of touching for the "Evil" was continued by him and by the rest of the Stuart monarchs.

"Divine right" of kings.

"The royal touch."

Very early in his reign James I. showed his arbitrary temper by resisting the demands of the Presbyterians for moderate reforms, and by levying taxes without the authority of Parliament. His son, Charles I. (1625–1649), doggedly insisted upon the same "divine right" to control religion and taxation, although the nation was bitterly resenting such control. Three successive Parliaments were dismissed for attempting to curtail his alleged rights, and for eleven years he ruled without recourse to

Tyranny of Charles I.

Parliament, raising money by such devices as the sale of monopolies, forced loans, and the levying of ship-money. This, which was theoretically the tax levied in times of war upon seaports for their own defence, was now levied upon every town in the kingdom in times of peace. A patriot named John Hampden decided to test its legality by refusing to pay his tax of twenty shillings, but the courts ruled against him. Nevertheless, the attempt to procure an income through arbitrary taxation proved a failure, and the king was forced again to summon two Parliaments in 1640. The second speedily passed a bill depriving the king of his power of dissolving Parliament, and thus assured itself a long tenure of power that ultimately won for it the name of the Long Parliament.

The Great Rebellion.

To these political causes of alienation between monarch and people the intensifying element of religious differences had not been wanting. Through his minister, Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, Charles had endeavored to crush out Puritanism within the Church, to increase in every way possible the features in which the English and the Roman churches stood on common ground, and to extend the domain of the Established Church over both his kingdoms, to the utter rooting out of Presbyterianism. As Scotland was almost entirely Presbyterian, this last attempt alienated practically the entire Scotch nation from his cause; and when Charles had at last driven Parliament into open rebellion by his repeated acts of tyranny, Pym, leader of the House of Commons, induced the Scotch to ally themselves with the rebels on condition that Presbyterianism should be made the official religion of England. After several minor engagements and two decisive conflicts Charles lost hope, and surrendered to the Scotch, hoping to rouse their loyalty to the House of Stuart. They, however, sold him to the English in return for a payment for their army, and he was executed in 1649. Thenceforth for ten years Oliver Cromwell, the leader of the army, was all-powerful in England.

In 1660 Charles II., son of the executed monarch, was restored to the throne of his father, and began a reign not so tyrannical but much more disgraceful. He sought to gain his ends by intrigue, falsehood, and dependence on France, and thus roused a powerful

opposition in Parliament. Dread of a return of Puritan tyranny on the one hand and of the establishment of Catholicism on the other led to stringent laws in defence of the reëstablished Episcopal Church. Laws were passed requiring all public and city officials to take an oath to support that church, and an attempt was made to disqualify the king's brother and heir (who was a Catholic) from succeeding him. This failed, but an anti-Catholic panic was created in 1678 by the announcement of an alleged "Popish Plot" to murder Charles in order to clear the way for his brother. The story was false, but it served its purpose of inflaming public feeling.

Reign of Charles II.

When, therefore, James II. succeeded his brother in 1685, his fate was almost predetermined; but he was too bigoted to perceive his danger, and by various arbitrary acts in violation of law provoked a Revolution in 1688 which drove him to France, and seated his son-in-law, William of Orange, on the throne of England. As William was childless, it was provided that the succession should pass to Anne, second daughter of James II., and then (in default of direct heirs) to his cousin Sophia, who had married the prince of the German state of Hanover. To distinguish the friends of Orange and Hanover from the Jacobites,[1] oaths of allegiance and supremacy were required from all army and navy officers, judges, magistrates, and city officials.

James II. and the Revolution.

The reign of William witnessed the development of a distinctive form of government in England. The divided sentiment of the nation in regard to the respective rights of the monarch and the people had resulted in the creation of two distinct parties. The Tories, maintaining the doctrine of divine right (see p. xi), and therefore holding the Revolution to have been indefensible in law, were weak supporters of William's policy, and looked forward with eagerness to the time when circumstances should favor the restoration of the exiled Stuarts. Especially active in Jacobite intrigues were the landed proprietors of the country districts, and the "High Church party" among the clergy, who

Whigs and Tories.

[1] Adherents of the Stuart family after the Revolution were called "Jacobites," as champions of James (Lat. = Jacobus) II. and his son.

wished to retain the Episcopal religion in its extreme form. On the other hand, the champions of liberty in Church and State, who had risked a traitor's death in summoning William to England, were bound from self-interest to support his policy; and as this coincided with the interests of the commercial classes, the Whig party found its chief support in the cities, and among the members of dissenting sects.

Reign of William III.

At the beginning of his reign William followed the traditional custom of the English monarchs in appointing as ministers able statesmen from both parties; but in carrying out his policy (which included an attempt to retain within the State Church as many liberal clergymen as possible and an attempt to involve England in his far-reaching plans for thwarting the baneful influence of France in European politics) he was driven to rely more and more upon the support of the Whigs, and thus through the pressure of circumstances party government (*i.e.* government through a ministry acting as a unit in support of a given line of policy) was inaugurated. When the exiled James II. died in France on September 16, 1701, his son, James Edward, was formally recognized by King Louis XIV. of France as legitimate king of England. The public sentiment of the English people, thus outraged, turned loyally to the support of William and his Whig advisers; but by his death in March, 1702, the task of punishing France in the war which followed devolved upon his successor, Queen Anne.

Spanish Succession War.

Besides Louis's insult to England, more practical issues were at stake in this war. Louis was determined that his grandson Philip should succeed to the throne of Spain, now vacant, and England, Austria, and Holland were determined to prevent the union of France and Spain into a single great power. The war was prolonged by Anne's Whig advisers for nearly a decade, but in 1710 the Tories carried the elections on a "peace platform." To this victory a mistake of the Whigs contributed.

In that year a High Church clergyman named Dr. Sacheverell preached, and subsequently published, two sermons in which he proclaimed that the Church was in danger of a betrayal of its principles, interests, and constitution at the hands of the Whig party, inculcated the doctrine of non-resistance to monarchs, and

denounced the toleration of Dissenters. Godolphin (the Whig leader), who had been attacked, urged the impeachment of Sacheverell by the House of Commons; the Whigs acquiesced in this course because they saw in the conduct of the case an opportunity to enunciate and defend before the whole country the Whig doctrine that "Resistance to the sovereign is admissible only when he has violated the fundamental law of the country (to the support of which he is pledged by the virtual compact implied in his holding the office), but *is then a duty*." Sacheverell was declared guilty by a vote of sixty-nine to fifty-two, but popular sympathy had rallied about him as a martyr to Whig tyranny. The queen seized the opportunity to place Tories in her ministry, and the next election sustained her government by sending a large Tory majority to the lower House. In 1713 the new party put an end to the Spanish Succession War.

Sacheverell's impeachment.

Meanwhile the failing health of Anne foreshadowed her early death, and the Tories under Bolingbroke, Ormonde, and Harcourt, having little to hope from the succession of the Hanoverians (who would owe their throne to Whig legislation, see p. xiii), began a series of intrigues for making void the Act of Settlement, and seating the Pretender, son of James II., upon the English throne. Before Bolingbroke could perfect his plans, Anne suddenly died, and George I. of Hanover succeeded her without opposition. He immediately surrounded himself with Whig advisers, and the elections with followed gave him also a Whig House of Commons. An act was passed extending the life of Parliament from three to seven years. Thenceforth for half a century the Whig supremacy remained unbroken.

Jacobite intrigues.

Accession of George I.

In a few years Robert Walpole rose to a commanding position in the party by reason of his skill in finance. Abandoning the old Whig policy of hostility to France, he used every means to make friends with that country, and to keep peace throughout Europe. Although some of his measures were unpopular, yet by using the power of the Lords and the landed Commoners to control elections, and that of the Crown to bribe members with pensions and offices of emolument, he retained his ascendency for many years without serious diminution; but it was at the cost of

Walpole's ascendency.

the friendship of some of the leading lights of his party, for his jealous temper would brook no possible rival in the ministry. In 1723 the brilliant Carteret was forced out of the secretaryship. Pulteney too, a former friend of Walpole's, was discarded, and revenged himself by lending his aid to Bolingbroke, who was making strenuous efforts to reinstate himself in English politics. In 1727 Pulteney took charge of the opposition periodical, *The Craftsman*, a paper designed to weaken Walpole's influence. In 1730 Townshend, too loyal to join the opposition, was forced into obscurity.

As all these men had been ardent Whigs, they could not bring themselves to espouse the cause of the Tories, who were still busy with Jacobite intrigues. They, therefore, claimed to be the legitimate Whig party, and branded Walpole as a renegade to Whig principles. When in 1733 he proposed a scheme for abolishing the unproductive customs duties and substituting an excise tax on the same goods, the measure, although both scientific and practicable, was met with a storm of objection from Whigs and Tories alike; thenceforth the very word "excise" was offensive to the Tories. Walpole withdrew the bill, but punished Lord Chesterfield for opposing it by removing him from office.

Walpole's excise tax.

Up to 1735 the opponents of Walpole had no one rallying point on which to unite; but thereafter they adopted as their leader Frederick, Prince of Wales. This young man had quarrelled with his father for curtailing his income, and therefore joined the opposition to vex him. With him was associated his friend and favorite, George Bubb Dodington, a man of low birth and little ability, who nevertheless aspired to be a patron of arts and letters, and a dictator in politics. As Walpole refused to bribe the press (which Dodington controlled), he was the subject of most violent attacks. The most bitter was that of Swift, whose *Gulliver's Travels*, in describing the intrigues at the Court of Blefuscu, was really attacking Walpole's policy. In 1742 Walpole was driven from office, on the eve of a war with Spain and France, and was succeeded by a coalition ministry of which Henry Pelham, his brother the Duke of Newcastle, Chesterfield, and Hardwicke were prominent members.

Fall of Walpole.

In 1760 George III. ascended the throne with a firm determination to be himself the chief of his ministers and the leader of his Parliaments. As he was an ardent Tory, he forced the Whigs out of office, — even those who, like the Cavendishes and Bentincks, had helped to place his family on the throne, — and made his tutor, an unpopular Scotchman, Lord Bute, prime minister. Bute signalized his brief term of power by alienating all parties through his arbitrary attempts at absolute government, and was succeeded in less than a year by George Grenville. Daily the unpopularity of the king and his ministers increased; for the nation could not bear to see its representatives dominated by the narrow-minded ministers of a narrower-minded king. When in 1762 the impudent and disreputable John Wilkes was arrested for publishing attacks on the government, the nation made of him a sort of idol in spite of his vices; and under the battle-cry of "Wilkes and Liberty" defeated the government in several elections. Finally Lord North, by his culpable subserviency to the king, plunged the country into war with the American colonies, and the disasters which followed brought the Whigs once more into power.

Reign of George III.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

JOHNSON'S LIFE.		CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.
Birth, September 18.	1709	**Eighth year of Queen Anne.**
	1710	Trial of Sacheverell.
	1711	*The Spectator.*
Touched by Queen Anne.	1712	Pope's *Messiah.*
	1714	**Accession of George I.**
	1716	Septennial Act.
	1721	Ministry of Walpole (to 1742).
	1726	Swift's *Gulliver's Travels.*
	1727	**Accession of George II.**
Entered Pembroke College, Oxford. Translation of Pope's *Messiah.*	1728	Pope's *Dunciad.* Gay's *Beggar's Opera.*
	1730	Thomson's *Seasons.*
Death of his father.	1731	*Gentleman's Magazine* founded.
Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia. Marriage. Academy at Edial.	1735	
Migration to London.	1737	Pope's *Imitations of Horace.*
London.	1738	
Parliamentary Debates (to 1743).	1740	Richardson's *Pamela.*
Life of Savage.	1744	Young's *Night Thoughts.*
	1746	Chesterfield, Secretary of State.
Plan for a Dictionary.	1747	
Vanity of Human Wishes. Irene.	1749	Fielding's *Tom Jones.*
The Rambler (to 1752).	1750	
	1751	Gray's *Elegy.*
Death of his wife.	1752	
Letter to Chesterfield. *Dictionary.*	1755	
The Idler (to 1760).	1758	
Death of his mother. *Rasselas.*	1759	
	1760	**Accession of George III.**
Pensioned.	1762	Ministry of Bute. Macpherson's *Ossian.* Churchill's *The Ghost.*
Introduction to Boswell.	1763	Peace of Paris.
The Club founded.	1764	Goldsmith's *Traveller.*
Edition of Shakespeare. LL.D., Dublin. Introduction to the Thrales.	1765	
	1766	Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield.*
	1769	Robertson's *Charles V.* Napoleon born.
Tour to Scotland.	1773	Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer.*
Journey to the Western Islands. Taxation no Tyranny. D.C.L., Oxford.	1775	Burke's *Speech on Conciliation with America.* Battle of Lexington.
	1776	Declaration of American Independence. Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* (to 1788).
Lives of the Poets (also 1781).	1779	
	1783	Peace with America.
Death, December 13.	1784	Mrs. Thrale's second marriage.
	1785	Boswell's *Tour to the Hebrides.*
	1786	Mrs. Piozzi's *Anecdotes of Johnson.*
	1788	Mrs. Piozzi's *Letters of Johnson.*
	1791	Boswell's *Life of Johnson.*

JOHNSON'S LITERARY IDEALS (DEDUCED FROM HIS CRITICAL WRITINGS) AND CRITICAL ESTIMATES OF HIS ACHIEVEMENTS.

1. **Poetry.** — Poetry is the art of uniting pleasure with truth, by calling imagination to the help of reason. . . . History must supply the writer with the rudiments of narration; morality must teach him the exact bounds, and different shades, of vice and virtue; from policy, and the practice of life, he has to learn the discriminations of character, and the tendency of the passions; and physiology must supply him with illustrations and images. To put these materials to poetical use, is required an imagination capable of painting nature, and realizing fiction. Nor is he yet a poet till he has attained the whole extension of his language, distinguished all the delicacies of phrase, and all the colors of words, and learned to adjust their different sounds to all the varieties of metrical moderation. (*Life of Milton.*)

The never-failing vigor and compression of Johnson, united with very correct and splendid versification, have justly given him a high station in the third class of English poets. (Drake.)

Whose verse may claim — grave, masculine and strong,
Superior praise to the mere poet's song. (Cowper.)

He was a poet of no mean order. His resonant lines, informed as they often are with the force of their author's character, take possession of the memory, and suffuse themselves through one's entire system of thought. (Birrell.) Any infusion of sensibility would have ruined . . . the manly simplicity, the dignified reticence, the transparent sincerity, of Johnson's austere and moving verses. (Millar.)

Satire. — All truth is valuable, and satirical criticism may be considered as useful when it rectifies error and improves judgment; he that refines the public taste is a public benefactor. (*Life of Pope.*) Young's species of satire is between those of Horace and Juvenal; and he has the gayety of Horace without his laxity of numbers, and the morality of Juvenal with greater variation of images. . . . His distichs have the weight of solid sentiment, and his points the sharpness of resistless truth. (*Life of Young.*)

Tennyson admired Johnson's grave earnestness, and said that certain of his couplets, for these qualities and for their "high moral tone," were not surpassed in English satire. (Tennyson.) What his satires lose in vindictiveness they gain in dignity and weight. No performances of the kind indicate so strong an impetus of moral and intellectual force behind their sonorous and majestic language. (Millar.)

Imitation. — Imitation is a kind of middle composition between translation and original design, which pleases when the thoughts are unexpectedly applicable, and the parallels lucky. . . . But the comparison requires knowledge of the original, which will likewise often detect strained applications. The work will be generally uncouth and party-colored; neither original nor translated, neither ancient nor modern. (*Life of Pope.*)

London is to me one of those few imitations that have all the ease and all the spirit of an original. (Gray.) *London* is the best imitation of the original that has appeared in our language, being possessed of all the force and satirical resentment of Juvenal. (Goldsmith.) To have shown so much genius and so much ingenuity at one and the same time, to have been so original even in imitation, places him in the highest order of minds. (Wilson.)

2. **Drama.** — Of *Cato* it has been not unjustly determined, that it is rather a poem in dialogue than a drama, rather a succession of just sentiments in elegant language, than a representation of natural affections, or of any state probable or possible in human life. . . . Its success has introduced or confirmed among us the use of dialogue too declamatory, of unaffecting elegance, and chill philosophy. (*Life of Addison.*)

For years the power of Tragedy declined;
From bard to bard the frigid caution crept,
Till Declamation roar'd, while Passion slept.
(*Prologue, Drury Lane*, 1747.)

When Johnson writes tragedy, "declamation roars and passion sleeps;" when Shakespeare wrote, he dipped his pen in his own heart. (Garrick.) The passage which Garrick quoted exactly describes, and emphatically condemns, the very species of tragedy of which *Irene* was an extreme example. . . . No more perfect description can be found of *Irene* than in his strictures upon *Cato* [quoted above]. (Elwin.)

3. **Fiction.** — The works of fiction are such as exhibit life in its true state, diversified only by accidents that daily happen in the world, and influenced by passions and qualities which are really to be found in conversing with mankind. . . . For this reason, these familiar histories may perhaps be made of greater use than the solemnities of professed morality, and convey the knowledge of vice and virtue with more efficacy than axioms and definitions. (*Rambler.*)

Rasselas takes its place among the minor classics of our tongue. . . The charm of the book is its humanity, the sweetness and wholesomeness of the long melancholy episodes, the wisdom of the moral reflections and disquisitions. (Gosse.) The agents are speaking puppets, without distinctive attributes. (Elwin.) The book is never dull. It is penetrated with a sane and delightful humor; it exposes a hundred fashionable sophistries; it inculcates an impregnable and enduring wisdom. (Millar.)

4. **Essays.** — The *Tatler* and the *Spectator* adjusted the unsettled practice of daily intercourse by propriety and politeness; and exhibited the characters and manners of the age. . . . They superadded literature and criticism, and taught, with great justness of argument and dignity of language, the most important duties and sublime truths. All these topics were happily varied with elegant fictions and refined allegories, and illuminated with different changes of style and felicities of invention. (*Life of Addison.*)

The great, the prevailing excellence of the *Rambler*, depends upon its moral and religious tendency; upon the vigor and originality of style and manner with which it inculcates the purest precepts of practical virtue. (Drake.) As the reader pursues his way through apologues and allegories, he will be rewarded by many delightful sketches of character, enlivened by jest and humor. (Duyckinck.) Johnson as an essayist is most happy when he analyzes a character, mingling criticism with narrative. (Gosse.) In the graver and more solemn passages, it may be questioned whether the palm does not rest with the later writer rather than with Addison. (Millar.)

5. **Biography.** — There is danger lest his [the biographer's] interest, his fear, his gratitude, or his tenderness, overpower his fidelity, and tempt him to conceal, if not to invent. . . . If we owe regard to the memory of the dead, there is yet more respect to be paid to knowledge, to virtue, and to truth. (*Rambler.*)

Johnson was far from being carried away by hero-worship. He is rather chary than enthusiastic in his allowance of merit, and scatters without mercy any air of romance or exaggeration that may have been gathered about an eminent name by the zeal of admirers. (Minto.) No one had a more piercing insight into character than Johnson. . . . This deep penetration, and the sagacious reflections which everywhere abound, make the human interest of his *Lives* equal, if not superior, to their literary criticism. (Elwin.)

6. **Criticism.** — The duty of criticism is neither to depreciate nor dignify by partial representations, but to hold out the light of reason, whatever it may discover. (*Rambler.*) In order to make a true estimate of the abilities and merits of a writer, it is always necessary to examine the genius of his age and the opinions of his contemporaries. (*Observations on Macbeth.*) The criticism which would destroy the power of pleasing must be blown aside. . . . Spence was a critic without malevolence, who thought it as much his duty to display beauties as expose faults; who censured with respect, and praised with alacrity. (*Life of Pope.*)

The merits of his literary criticisms were the result of his good sense, their defects the result of his narrow sympathies and frag-

mentary knowledge. . . . This [second quotation above] was a perfection-height of critical qualification that indolence would not suffer himself to attain. (Minto.) If he does not convince us of his complete impartiality, he at least bases his decisions upon solid and worthy grounds. (Stephen.) The bulk of the *Lives* consists of criticism which, for acuteness of discrimination, warmth of praise, justness of censure, and force of expression, is still unrivaled. (Elwin.) The more we study him, the higher will be our esteem for the power of his mind, the largeness of his knowledge, the freshness, fearlessness, and strength of his judgments. (Arnold.)

7. **Travels.** — Every writer of travels should consider that, like all other authors, he undertakes either to instruct or please, or to mingle pleasure with instruction. . . . He that pleases must offer new images to his reader, and should remember that the great object of remark is human life. (*Idler.*)

Johnson's *Journey* has the indescribable but irresistible charm of a monument of literary genius. (Craik.) It abounds in extensive philosophical views of society, and in ingenious sentiment and lively description. (Boswell.) The general speculations form the real interest and value of the work, and bear the impress of his acute and vigorous understanding. (Elwin.)

8. **Controversy.** — He that shall peruse the political pamphlets of any past reign will wonder why they were so eagerly read or so loudly praised. Many of the performances which had power to inflame factions and fill a kingdom with confusion have now very little effect upon a frigid critic; and the time is coming when the compositions of later hirelings shall lie equally despised. (*Rambler.*)

Johnson's political pamphlets were forcible, but entirely without historical breadth or sympathy. (Gosse.) Few have ever equaled him in gladiatorial skill. (Elwin.) It may be doubted if his pamphlets fall much behind even the best of Burke's writings on the French Revolution. . . . They excel in the trenchant vigor of their language, in the sturdy fortitude of their tone, and in the overwhelming force of their attack. (Millar.)

JOHNSON'S INFLUENCE AND SERVICES.

He that wishes to be counted among the benefactors of posterity must add by his own toil to the acquisitions of his ancestors, and secure his memory from neglect by some valuable improvement. (Johnson, *The Rambler*.)

Literature. — There is perhaps no subsequent prose-writer upon whose style that of Johnson has been altogether without its effect. (G. Craik.) If Addison be excepted, no writer of the eighteenth century can be said to have contributed so highly, so copiously, and so permanently to the improvement of our literature and language as Johnson. (Drake.) All that is best in English prose since his day is his debtor in respect of not a few of its highest qualities, above all, in respect of absolute lucidity, unfailing vigor, and saving common sense. (H. Craik.)

Life. — His influence was so wide, and withal so wholesome, that literary life in this country has never been since his day what it was before it. He has made the more sordid parts of its weakness shameful, and he has raised a standard of personal conduct that every one admits. (Gosse.) His mighty power is yet sending forth a mild influence over lands and seas, like the gentle movements of the dew and the sunbeam. (Barnes.) If to-day the man of letters is honored and even opulent, if it be his great vocation to mold the minds of myriads through the press, and to preach in a secular temple as wide as the horizons, it was old Samuel Johnson that won for him this liberty, and by his poverty and sorrow made many rich. (Dawson.)

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DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF JOHNSON'S WORKS.

Early in his youth Johnson gave several proofs of his poetical genius, but his first important work was a

1. *Translation of Pope's Messiah into Latin Verse* (1728). (*See* Index, "Pope.") It was performed as a college exercise and published three years later in a Miscellany, its editor hoping that the version would "be no discredit to the excellent original." Pope, it is told, remarked that the translator left it "a question for posterity, whether his or mine be the original." At Birmingham Johnson wrote his first prose work, an

2. *Abridgment and Translation of Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia* (1735), made, not from a Latin book, as Macaulay says, but from a French version of a Portuguese work (1659) by Lobo, a Jesuit missionary. The Preface is the earliest specimen of Johnson's characteristic style, and the book undoubtedly suggested not only the scene, but the name, of his subsequent *Rasselas*.

While employed on the *Gentleman's Magazine*, he published

3. *London* (1738), a short poem in heroic couplets (263 ll.), imitating the Third Satire of Juvenal (*q.v.*, Index). The poet's imaginary friend, Thales, indignant at London life, is departing for Wales, and contrasts the pleasures of rural solitude with the dangers and corruption of the metropolis, imputed, in great part, to the Whig ministry (*see* ¶ 13). One line, which Johnson capitalized, is famous for its truth and terseness: —

> "Slow rises worth, by poverty depress'd."

His most important contributions to the *Gentleman's Magazine* were the reports of the

4. *Parliamentary Debates* (1740–3), described in ¶ 13. They were collected after his death (1787) as specimens of political eloquence.

5. *The Life of Richard Savage* (1744), with moral and critical observations, is, next to the *Life of Pope*, the longest of his biographical works. It throws much light on Johnson's own career, as well as upon the life of his Grub-Street contemporaries. (*See* below, no. 19.)

6. *The Plan for a Dictionary of the English Language* (1747), addressed to Lord Chesterfield, outlines and illustrates Johnson's scheme for its contents. While engaged in realizing his great design, he wrote

7. *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (1749), his most famous poem, an imitation of Juvenal's Tenth Satire. Like *London*, it is in heroic verse, but exceeds it by 105 lines, and is more elevated and pathetic. The futility of man's ambitious struggles for happiness is illustrated by examples from the careers of noted statesmen, warriors, churchmen, scholars, etc., the poem closing, however, with a statement of the true means for attaining happiness (*see* ¶ 20 and notes). In February, Garrick produced Johnson's

8. *Irene* (1749), a five-act tragedy, in blank verse, written in 1737. The action is based upon the passionate love of Mahomet the Great, first Sultan of the Turks, for a Greek captive, Irene. "The matchless fair has blessed him with compliance," just as his guards have detected a conspiracy against the throne. Its ringleader, the Grand Vizier, in his last moments upon the rack, accuses Irene of complicity. At the Sultan's command, his betrothed is led away to be strangled, and Mahomet, after the tardy disclosure of her innocence, is left to lament his fatal error.

9. *The Rambler* (1750–2) is described in ¶¶ 23–25, and List of Periodicals, p. xxx. After seven years of intermittent labor, Johnson completed his

10. *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), with Preface, Grammar, and History of the Language, in two folio volumes. (*See* ¶¶ 27–29.) Six editions were published in

his lifetime, besides the *Abridgment* (1756). For an account of

11. *The Idler* (1758–60), *see* ¶ 30, and List of Periodicals, p. xxx. While writing these essays, Johnson published

12. *Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia* (1759), a short, didactic romance, similar in theme to no. 7. Rasselas and his sister Nekayah are confined, according to custom, in the "Happy Valley," where every conceivable desire may be gratified. Curious, however, to see the outside world, the prince and princess, with her attendant, Pekuah, and an old sage, Imlac, finally make their escape, and wander through the land. Their survey of mankind in many forms convinces them that human existence in general is miserable, and they ultimately return to the "Happy Valley." The story serves merely as the connecting thread of a series of moral disquisitions, but no attempt is made to solve the problem of life.

After a delay of nine years, Johnson issued his edition of

13. *The Plays of William Shakespeare* (1765), in eight volumes, with notes, accounts of each play, and a celebrated Preface, containing a critical examination of the poet's works, a review of the labors of previous editors, and a statement of his method of annotation. Johnson's

14–17. *Political Tracts* (1770–5) are described in ¶¶ 43, 44, and List of Periodicals, p. xxx. They were published collectively in 1776, a year after the appearance of his

18. *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775), in which the descriptions of the country and its people are varied by entertaining reflections. His last and greatest work is

19. *The Lives of the English Poets* (1779–81), first published as biographical and critical prefaces to a collection of British poets (not edited by Johnson). The lives number fifty-two, and range from Cowley to Gray, including Milton, Dryden, Swift, Addison, and Pope, the last of which is the longest of Johnson's biographies. *The Life of Savage* (no. 5) is reprinted with practically no changes. (*See* ¶¶ 45–49.)

1.	*The Tatler* . . .	Apr., 1709–Jan., 1711. (Tri-weekly.)	271 Nos.	Steele (188). Addison (42).	To present polite literature, social comment, political news, etc.
2.	*The Spectator*, 1st series	Mar., 1711–Dec., 1712. (Daily.)	555 Nos.	Addison (274). Steele (236).	To create a sound public taste, and to foster morality and elegance in polite literature.
	2d series	1714 (tri-weekly).	80 Nos.	Addison.	
3.	*The Lay Monastery* .	Nov., 1713–Feb., 1714. (Tri-weekly.)	40 Nos.	Sir Richard Blackmore. Hughes.	
4.	*The Censor* . . .	1715, 1717 (tri-weekly).	96 Nos.	Lewis Theobald.	
5.	*The Freethinker* . .	Mar., 1718–Sept., 1719. (Semi-weekly.)	159 Nos.	Ambrose Philips. George Stubbs.	To continue work of the *Spectator*.
6.	*The Plain Dealer* .	Mar., 1724–May, 1725 (Semi-weekly.)	117 Nos.	Aaron Hill. William Bond.	
7.	*Gentleman's Magazine*	1731 + (monthly).	294 Vols.	Cave, editor to 1754.	Miscellany of literature, news, etc.
8.	*The Champion* . .	Nov., 1739–June, 1740. (Tri-weekly.)	94 Nos.	Fielding.	To continue work of the *Spectator*.
9.	*Monthly Review* . .	1749–1845.	249 Vols.	Griffiths, ed. to 1803.	Literary miscellany. (Whig.)
10.	*The Rambler* . .	Mar., 1750–Mar., 1752 (Semi-weekly.)	208 Nos.	Johnson (203).	To continue work of the *Spectator*.
11.	*The Adventurer* . .	Nov., 1752–Mar., 1754 (Semi-weekly.)	140 Nos.	Hawkesworth (70). Johnson (29).	
12.	*The World* . . .	Jan., 1753–Dec., 1756. (Weekly.)	209 Nos.	Moore, editor (61), Chesterfield (24), Walpole (9).	To ridicule and satirize the fashionable follies of the age.
13.	*Critical Review* . .	1756–1817. (Monthly.)	200 Vols.	Smollett, 1st editor. Johnson, etc.	Similar to the *Monthly* (No. 9), but with Tory principles.
14.	*Literary Magazine* .	May, 1756–July, 1758. (Monthly.)	27 Nos.	Johnson, etc.	Similar to Nos. 9 and 13.
15.	*The Idler* . . .	Apr., 1758–Apr., 1760. (Weekly.)	103 Nos.	Johnson (91).	To continue work of the *Spectator*.
16.	*The False Alarm* .	1770	Pamphlet	Johnson.	To justify the government's exclusion of Wilkes from Parliament.
17.	*Falkland's Islands* .	1771	Pamphlet.	Johnson.	To defend the ministry's policy regarding the islands.
18.	*The Patriot* . . .	1774	Pamphlet.	Johnson.	To define the true patriot, and to support the government's policy.
19.	*Taxation no Tyranny*	1775	Pamphlet.	Johnson.	To defend taxation of America.

MACAULAY'S

LIFE OF JOHNSON.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

(December, 1856.)

1. Samuel Johnson, one of the most en
lish writers of the eighteenth century, was
Michael Johnson, who was, at the beginni
that century, a magistrate of Lichfield,° and a
seller of great note in the midland counties.
abilities and attainments seem to have beer
ble. He was so well acquainted with the
the volumes which he exposed to sale, that
rectors of Staffordshire and Worcestershire t
an oracle on points of learning. Between h
clergy, indeed, there was a strong religious a
sympathy. He was a zealous churchman, a
he qualified himself for municipal office by

sloth and procrastination; a kind and generous heart, with a gloomy and irritable temper. He had inherited from his ancestors a scrofulous taint, which it was beyond the power of medicine to remove. His parents were weak enough to believe that the royal touch[1] was a specific for this malady. In his third year he was taken up to London, inspected by the court surgeon, prayed over by the court chaplains, and stroked and presented with a piece of gold by Queen Anne. One of his earliest recollections was that of a stately lady in a diamond stomacher and a long black hood. Her hand was applied in vain.[2] The boy's features, which were originally noble and not irregular, were distorted by his malady. His cheeks were deeply scarred. He lost for a time the sight of one eye, and he saw but very imperfectly with the other. But the force of his mind overcame every impediment. Indolent as he was, he acquired knowledge with such ease and rapidity that at every school to which he was sent he was soon the best scholar. From sixteen to eighteen he resided at home, and was left to his own devices. He learned much at this time, though his studies were without guidance and without plan. He ransacked his father's shelves, dipped into a multitude of books, read what was interesting, and passed over what was dull. An ordinary lad would have acquired little or no useful knowledge in such a way: but much that was dull to ordinary lads was interesting to Samuel. He read little Greek; for his proficiency in that language was not such that he could take much pleasure in the masters

Early education.

[1] p. xi., and Index. [2] Note, p. 59.

of Attic° poetry and eloquence. But he had left school a good Latinist; and he soon acquired, in the large and miscellaneous library of which he now had the command, an extensive knowledge of Latin literature. That Augustan° delicacy of taste which is the boast of the great public° schools of England he never possessed. But he was early familiar with some classical writers who were quite unknown to the best scholars in the sixth form at Eton.[1] He was peculiarly attracted by the works of the great restorers° of learning. Once, while searching for some apples, he found a huge folio volume of Petrarch's° works. The name excited his curiosity; and he eagerly devoured hundreds of pages.[2] Indeed, the diction and versification of his own Latin compositions show that he had paid at least as much attention to modern copies from the antique as to the original models.

2. While he was thus irregularly educating himself, his family was sinking into hopeless poverty. Old Michael Johnson was much better qualified to pore upon books, and to talk about them, than to trade in them. His business declined; his debts increased; it was with difficulty that the daily expenses of his household were defrayed. It was out of his power to support his son at either university:[3] but a wealthy neighbour offered assistance; and, in reliance on promises which proved to be of very little value, Samuel was entered at Pembroke College, Oxford.[3] When the young scholar presented himself to the rulers

Matriculation at Oxford.

[1] Index, "Public Schools." [2] Note, p. 59.
[3] Index, "Universities."

of that society,[1] they were amazed not more by his ungainly figure and eccentric manners than by the quantity of extensive and curious information which he had picked up during many months of desultory but not unprofitable study. On the first day of his residence he surprised his teachers by quoting Macrobius°; and one of the most learned among them declared that he had never known a freshman of equal attainments.

College career.

3. At Oxford, Johnson resided during about three years. He was poor, even to raggedness; and his appearance excited a mirth and a pity which were equally intolerable to his haughty spirit. He was driven from the quadrangle of Christ Church[1] by the sneering looks which the members of that aristocratical society cast at the holes in his shoes. Some charitable person placed a new pair at his door; but he spurned them away in a fury. Distress made him, not servile, but reckless and ungovernable. No opulent gentleman commoner,[1] panting for one-and-twenty, could have treated the academical authorities with more gross disrespect. The needy scholar was generally to be seen under the gate of Pembroke, a gate now adorned with his effigy, haranguing a circle of lads, over whom, in spite of his tattered gown and dirty linen, his wit and audacity gave him an undisputed ascendency. In every mutiny against the discipline of the college he was the ringleader. Much was pardoned, however, to a youth so highly distinguished by abilities and acquirements. He had early made himself known by turning Pope's° Messiah into Latin verse.[2] The style and rhythm, indeed, were not exactly Virgilian°;

[1] Index, "Universities." [2] List of Works, 1, p. xxvii.

PEMBROKE COLLEGE, OXFORD

but the translation found many admirers, and was read with pleasure by Pope himself.

4. The time drew near at which Johnson would, in the ordinary course of things, have become a Bachelor of Arts:[1] but he was at the end of his resources. Those promises of support on which he had relied had not been kept. His family could do nothing for him. His debts to Oxford tradesmen were small indeed, yet larger than he could pay. In the autumn of 1731, he was under the necessity of quitting the university without a degree.[2] In the following winter his father died. The old man left but a pittance; and of that pittance almost the whole was appropriated to the support of his widow. The property to which Samuel succeeded amounted to no more than twenty pounds.

and its premature ending.

5. His life, during the thirty years which followed, was one hard struggle with poverty. The misery of that struggle needed no aggravation, but was aggravated by the sufferings of an unsound body and an unsound mind. Before the young man left the university, his hereditary malady had broken forth in a singularly cruel form. He had become an incurable hypochondriac. He said long after that he had been mad all his life, or at least not perfectly sane; and, in truth, eccentricities less strange than his have often been thought grounds sufficient for absolving felons, and for setting aside wills. His grimaces, his gestures, his mutterings, sometimes diverted and sometimes terrified people who did not know him. At a dinner-table he would, in a fit of absence, stoop down and twitch off a lady's shoe.

Effect of hardships on his character.

[1] Index, "Universities."

[2] Note, p. 59.

He would amaze a drawing-room by suddenly ejaculating a clause of the Lord's Prayer. He would conceive an unintelligible aversion to a particular alley, and perform a great circuit rather than see the hateful place. He would set his heart on touching every post in the streets through which he walked. If by any chance he missed a post, he would go back a hundred yards and repair the omission.[1] Under the influence of his disease, his senses became morbidly torpid, and his imagination morbidly active. At one time he would stand poring on the town clock without being able to tell the hour. At another, he would distinctly hear his mother, who was many miles off, calling him by his name. But this was not the worst. A deep melancholy took possession of him, and gave a dark tinge to all his views of human nature and of human destiny. Such wretchedness as he endured has driven many men to shoot themselves or drown themselves. But he was under no temptation to commit suicide. He was sick of life; but he was afraid of death; and he shuddered at every sight or sound which reminded him of the inevitable hour. In religion he found but little comfort during his long and frequent fits of dejection; for his religion partook of his own character. The light from heaven shone on him indeed, but not in a direct line, or with its own pure splendour. The rays had to struggle through a disturbing medium; they reached him refracted, dulled and discoloured by the thick gloom which had settled on his soul; and, though they might be sufficiently clear to guide him, were too dim to cheer him.

[1] Note, p. 59.

6. With such infirmities of body and of mind, this celebrated man was left, at two-and-twenty, to fight his way through the world. He remained during about five years in the midland counties. At Lichfield,° his birth-place and his early home, he had inherited some friends and acquired others. He was kindly noticed by Henry Hervey,° a gay officer of noble family, who happened to be quartered there. Gilbert Walmesley,° registrar of the ecclesiastical court of the diocese,[1] a man of distinguished parts, learning, and knowledge of the world, did himself honour by patronising the young adventurer, whose repulsive person, unpolished manners and squalid garb moved many of the petty aristocracy of the neighbourhood to laughter or to disgust. At Lichfield, however, Johnson could find no way of earning a livelihood. He became usher of a grammar° school in Leicestershire; he resided as a humble companion in the house of a country gentleman; but a life of dependence was insupportable to his haughty spirit. He repaired to Birmingham,° and there earned a few guineas by literary drudgery. In that town he printed a translation,[2] little noticed at the time, and long forgotten, of a Latin book about Abyssinia.° He then put forth proposals for publishing by subscription the poems of Politian,° with notes containing a history of modern Latin verse: but subscriptions did not come in; and the volume never appeared.

Earliest employments.

7. While leading this vagrant and miserable life, Johnson fell in love. The object of his passion was Mrs. Elizabeth Porter, a widow who had children as old as

[1] p. x., "Church and State." [2] List of Works, 2, p. xxvii.

himself. To ordinary spectators, the lady appeared to be a short, fat, coarse woman, painted half an inch thick, dressed in gaudy colours, and fond of exhibiting provincial airs and graces which were not exactly those of the Queensberrys° and Lepels. To Johnson, however, whose passions were strong, whose eyesight was too weak to distinguish ceruse from natural bloom, and who had seldom or never been in the same room with a woman of real fashion, his Titty,° as he called her, was the most beautiful, graceful and accomplished of her sex. That his admiration was unfeigned cannot be doubted; for she was as poor as himself. She accepted, with a readiness which did her little honour, the addresses of a suitor who might have been her son.[1] The marriage, however, in spite of occasional wranglings, proved happier than might have been expected. The lover continued to be under the illusions of the wedding-day till the lady died in her sixty-fourth year. On her monument he placed an inscription extolling the charms of her person and of her manners; and, when, long after her decease, he had occasion to mention her, he exclaimed, with a tenderness half ludicrous, half pathetic, "Pretty creature!"

Marriage.

8. His marriage made it necessary for him to exert himself more strenuously than he had hitherto done. He took a house in the neighbourhood of his native town, and advertised for pupils. But eighteen months passed away; and only three pupils came to his academy. Indeed, his appearance was so strange, and his temper so violent, that his schoolroom must have

The "Academy."

[1] Note, p. 60.

resembled an ogre's den. Nor was the tawdry painted grandmother whom he called his Titty well qualified to make provision for the comfort of young gentlemen. David Garrick,° who was one of the pupils, used, many years later, to throw the best company of London into convulsions of laughter by mimicking the endearments of this extraordinary pair.

9. At length Johnson, in the twenty-eighth year of his age, determined to seek his fortune in the capital as a literary adventurer. He set out with a few guineas, three acts of the tragedy of Irene in manuscript,[1] and two or three letters of introduction from his friend Walmesley.° Migration to London.

10. Never, since literature became a calling in England, had it been a less gainful calling than at the time when Johnson took up his residence in London. In the preceding generation a writer of eminent merit was sure to be munificently rewarded by the government. The least that he could expect was a pension° or a sinecure place; and, if he showed any aptitude for politics, he might hope to be a member of parliament, a lord of the treasury, an ambassador, a secretary of state.[2] It would be easy, on the other hand, to name several writers of the nineteenth century of whom the least successful has received forty thousand pounds from the booksellers.[3] But Johnson entered on his vocation in the most dreary part of the dreary interval which separated two ages of prosperity. Literature had ceased to flourish under the patronage of the great, and had not begun to flourish under the patronage of the public. One man of Condition of letters, 1737.

[1] Note, p. 60. [2] Note, p. 60. [3] Note, p. 60.

letters, indeed, Pope,° had acquired by his pen what was then considered as a handsome fortune, and lived on a footing of equality with nobles and ministers of State. But this was a solitary exception. Even an author whose reputation was established, and whose works were popular, such an author as Thomson,° whose Seasons were in every library, such an author as Fielding,° whose Pasquin had had a greater run than any drama since The Beggar's Opera,[1] was sometimes glad to obtain, by pawning his best coat, the means of dining on tripe at a cook shop underground, where he could wipe his hands, after his greasy meal, on the back of a Newfoundland dog. It is easy, therefore, to imagine what humiliations and privations must have awaited the novice who had still to earn a name. One of the publishers to whom Johnson applied for employment measured with a scornful eye that athletic though uncouth frame, and exclaimed, "You had better get a porter's° knot, and carry trunks." Nor was the advice bad; for a porter was likely to be as plentifully fed, and as comfortably lodged, as a poet.

Privations in London.

11. Some time appears to have elapsed before Johnson was able to form any literary connexion from which he could expect more than bread for the day which was passing over him. He never forgot the generosity with which Hervey, who was now residing in London, relieved his wants during this time of trial. "Harry Hervey," said the old philosopher many years later, "was a vicious man; but he was very kind to me. If you call a dog Hervey I shall love him." At Hervey's table Johnson sometimes enjoyed feasts which were made

[1] Index, "Gay, John."

more agreeable by contrast. But in general he dined, and thought that he dined well, on sixpenny worth of meat, and a pennyworth of bread, at an alehouse near Drury Lane.°

12. The effect of the privations and sufferings which he endured at this time was discernible to the last in his temper and his deportment. His manners had never been courtly. They now became almost savage. Being frequently under the necessity of wearing shabby coats and dirty shirts, he became a confirmed sloven. Being often very hungry when he sat down to his meals, he contracted a habit of eating with ravenous greediness. Even to the end of his life, and even at the tables of the great, the sight of food affected him as it affects wild beasts and birds of prey. His taste in cookery, formed in subterranean ordinaries° and alamode° beef shops, was far from delicate. Whenever he was so fortunate as to have near him a hare that had been kept too long, or a meat pie made with rancid butter, he gorged himself with such violence that his veins swelled, and the moisture broke out on his forehead. The affronts which his poverty emboldened stupid and low-minded men to offer to him would have broken a mean spirit into sycophancy, but made him rude even to ferocity. Unhappily the insolence which, while it was defensive, was pardonable, and in some sense respectable, accompanied him into societies where he was treated with courtesy and kindness. He was repeatedly provoked into striking those who had taken liberties with him. All the sufferers, however, were wise enough to abstain from talking about their beatings, except Osborne, the most

and their effects.

rapacious and brutal of booksellers, who proclaimed everywhere that he had been knocked down by the huge fellow whom he had hired to puff the Harleian Library.°

13. About a year after Johnson had begun to reside in London, he was fortunate enough to obtain regular employment from Cave,° an enterprising and intelligent bookseller, who was proprietor and editor of the "Gentleman's Magazine."[1] That journal, just entering on the ninth year of its long existence, was the only periodical work in the kingdom which then had what would now be called a large circulation. It was, indeed, the chief source of parliamentary intelligence. It was not then safe, even during a recess, to publish an account of the proceedings of either House without some disguise.[2] Cave, however, ventured to entertain his readers with what he called "Reports of the Debates of the Senate of Lilliput.°" France was Blefuscu: London was Mildendo: pounds were sprugs: the Duke of Newcastle° was the Nardac Secretary of State: Lord Hardwicke° was the Hurgo Hickrad: and William Pulteney° was Wingul Pulnub.[3] To write the speeches was, during several years, the business of Johnson. He was generally furnished with notes, meagre indeed, and inaccurate, of what had been said; but sometimes he had to find arguments and eloquence both for the ministry and for the opposition. He was himself a Tory, not from rational conviction — for his serious opinion was that one form of government was just as good or as bad as another — but from mere passion, such

First employment: parliamentary reports.

Their partisan bias.

[1] List of Periodicals, 7, p. xxx. [2] Note, p. 60.

[3] p. xv., "Walpole's ascendency;" "Fall of Walpole."

as inflamed the Capulets° against the Montagues, or the Blues° of the Roman circus against the Greens. In his infancy he had heard so much talk about the villanies of the Whigs, and the dangers of the Church, that he had become a furious partisan when he could scarcely speak. Before he was three he had insisted on being taken to hear Sacheverell[1] preach at Lichfield Cathedral, and had listened to the sermon with as much respect, and probably with as much intelligence, as any Staffordshire squire in the congregation. The work which had been begun in the nursery had been completed by the university. Oxford, when Johnson resided there, was the most Jacobitical place in England; and Pembroke was one of the most Jacobitical colleges in Oxford. The prejudices which he brought up to London were scarcely less absurd than those of his own Tom Tempest.° Charles II. and James II. were two of the best kings that ever reigned.[2] Laud,[3] a poor creature who never did, said, or wrote anything indicating more than the ordinary capacity of an old woman, was a prodigy of parts and learning over whose tomb Art and Genius still continued to weep. Hampden[3] deserved no more honourable name than that of "the zealot of rebellion."[4] Even the ship money,[3] condemned not less decidedly by Falkland° and Clarendon° than by the bitterest Roundheads,° Johnson would not pronounce to have been an unconstitutional impost. Under a government, the mildest that had ever been known in the world — under a government

[1] p. xiv., "Sacheverell's impeachment." [2] p. xiii.
[3] p. xi., "Tyranny of Charles I.;" "Great Rebellion."
[4] Note, p. 61.

which allowed to the people an unprecedented liberty of speech and action — he fancied that he was a slave ;[1] he assailed the ministry with obloquy which refuted itself, and regretted the lost freedom and happiness of those golden days in which a writer who had taken but one-tenth part of the license allowed to him would have been pilloried, mangled with the shears, whipped at the cart's tail, and flung into a noisome dungeon to die. He hated dissenters and stock-jobbers, the excise[2] and the army, septennial parliaments,[3] and continental connexions. He long had an aversion to the Scotch, an aversion of which he could not remember the commencement, but which, he owned, had probably originated in his abhorrence of the conduct of the nation during the Great Rebellion.[4] It is easy to guess in what manner debates on great party questions were likely to be reported by a man whose judgment was so much disordered by party spirit. A show of fairness was indeed necessary to the prosperity of the Magazine. But Johnson long afterward owned that, though he had saved appearances, he had taken care that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it ; and, in fact, every passage which has lived, every passage which bears the marks of his higher faculties, is put into the mouth of some member of the opposition.[5]

14. A few weeks after Johnson had entered on these obscure labours, he published a work which at once placed him high among the writers of his age. It is probable that what he had suffered during his first year

[1] Note, p. 61. [2] p. xvi. [3] p. xv., "Accession of Geo. I."
[4] p. xii., and Note, p. 61. [5] Note, p. 61.

in London had often reminded him of some parts of that noble poem in which Juvenal° had described the misery and degradation of a needy man of letters, lodged among the pigeons' nests in the tottering garrets which overhung the streets of Rome. Pope's° admirable imitations of Horace's° Satires and Epistles had recently appeared, were in every hand, and were by many readers thought superior to the originals. What Pope had done for Horace, Johnson aspired to do for Juvenal. The enterprise was bold, and yet judicious. For between Johnson and Juvenal there was much in common, much more certainly than between Pope and Horace.[1]

First satire: *London*,

15. Johnson's London[2] appeared without his name in May 1738. He received only ten guineas for this stately and vigorous poem: but the sale was rapid, and the success complete. A second edition was required within a week. Those small critics who are always desirous to lower established reputations ran about proclaiming that the anonymous satirist was superior to Pope in Pope's own peculiar department of literature. It ought to be remembered, to the honour of Pope, that he joined heartily in the applause with which the appearance of a rival genius was welcomed. He made inquiries about the author of London. Such a man, he said, could not long be concealed. The name was soon discovered; and Pope, with great kindness, exerted himself to obtain an academical degree and the mastership of a grammar school for the poor young poet. The attempt failed; and Johnson remained a bookseller's hack.

and its reception.

[1] Note, p. 61. [2] List of Works, 3, p. xxvii.

16. It does not appear that these two men, the most eminent writer of the generation which was going out, and the most eminent writer of the generation which was coming in, ever saw each other. They lived in very different circles, one surrounded by dukes and earls, the other by starving pamphleteers and index-makers. Among Johnson's associates at this time may be mentioned Boyse, who, when his shirts were pledged, scrawled Latin verses sitting up in bed with his arms through two holes in his blanket; who composed very respectable sacred poetry when he was sober; and who was at last run over by a hackney coach when he was drunk: Hoole,° surnamed the metaphysical tailor, who, instead of attending to his measures, used to trace geometrical diagrams on the board where he sate cross-legged: and the penitent impostor, George Psalmanazar,° who, after poring all day, in a humble lodging, on the folios of Jewish rabbis and Christian fathers, indulged himself at night with literary and theological conversation at an alehouse in the city. But the most remarkable of the persons with whom at this time Johnson consorted was Richard Savage,° an earl's son, a shoemaker's apprentice, who had seen life in all its forms, who had feasted among blue° ribbons in Saint James's Square,° and had lain with fifty pounds' weight of irons on his legs in the condemned ward of Newgate.° This man had, after many vicissitudes of fortune, sunk at last into abject and hopeless poverty. His pen had failed him. His patrons had been taken away by death, or estranged by the riotous profusion with which he squandered their bounty, and the ungrateful insolence

Early associates.

Savage.

with which he rejected their advice. He now lived by begging. He dined on venison and champagne whenever he had been so fortunate as to borrow a guinea. If his questing had been unsuccessful, he appeased the rage of hunger with some scraps of broken meat, and lay down to rest under the Piazza of Covent Garden° in warm weather, and, in cold weather, as near as he could get to the furnace of a glass house. Yet, in his misery, he was still an agreeable companion. He had an inexhaustible store of anecdotes about that gay and brilliant world from which he was now an outcast. He had observed the great men of both parties in hours of careless relaxation, had seen the leaders of opposition without the mask of patriotism, and had heard the prime minister roar with laughter and tell stories not over decent. During some months Savage lived in the closest familiarity with Johnson; and then the friends parted, not without tears. Johnson remained in London to drudge for Cave. Savage went to the West of England, lived there as he had lived everywhere, and, in 1743, died, penniless and heart-broken, in Bristol gaol.

17. Soon after his death, while the public curiosity was strongly excited about his extraordinary character, and his not less extraordinary adventures, a life of him appeared, widely different from the catchpenny lives of eminent men which were then a staple article of manufacture in Grub Street.° The style was indeed deficient in ease and variety; and the writer was evidently too partial to the Latin element of our language. But the little work, with all its faults, was a masterpiece. No finer specimen of literary biography existed in any

Biography: *Life of Savage.*

language, living or dead; and a discerning critic might have confidently predicted that the author was destined to be the founder of a new school of English eloquence.[1]

Scheme for the *Dictionary.*

18. The Life of Savage was anonymous; but it was well known in literary circles that Johnson was the writer. During the three years which followed, he produced no important work; but he was not, and indeed could not be, idle. The fame of his abilities and learning continued to grow. Warburton° pronounced him a man of parts and genius; and the praise of Warburton was then no light thing. Such was Johnson's reputation that, in 1747, several eminent booksellers combined to employ him in the arduous work of preparing a Dictionary of the English Language, in two folio volumes. The sum which they agreed to pay him was only fifteen hundred guineas; and out of this sum he had to pay several poor men of letters who assisted him in the humbler parts of his task.

Efforts to secure a patron.

19. The prospectus[2] of the Dictionary he addressed to the Earl of Chesterfield.° Chesterfield had long been celebrated for the politeness of his manners, the brilliancy of his wit, and the delicacy of his taste. He was acknowledged to be the finest speaker in the House of Lords. He had recently governed Ireland, at a momentous conjuncture, with eminent firmness, wisdom, and humanity; and he had since become Secretary of State. He received Johnson's homage with the most winning affability, and requited it with a few guineas, bestowed doubtless in a very graceful manner, but was by

[1] List of Works, 5, p. xxviii.; Johnson's Ideals, § 5, p. xxii.

[2] List of Works, 6, p. xxviii.

no means desirous to see all his carpets blackened with the London mud, and his soups and wines thrown to right and left over the gowns of fine ladies and the waistcoats of fine gentlemen, by an absent, awkward scholar, who gave strange starts and uttered strange growls, who dressed like a scarecrow, and ate like a cormorant. During some time Johnson continued to call on his patron, but, after being repeatedly told by the porter that his lordship was not at home, took the hint, and ceased to present himself at the inhospitable door.

20. Johnson had flattered himself that he should have completed his Dictionary by the end of 1750; but it was not till 1755 that he at length gave his huge volumes to the world.[1] During the seven years which he passed in the drudgery of penning definitions and marking quotations for transcription, he sought for relaxation in literary labour of a more agreeable kind. In 1749 he published the Vanity of Human Wishes,[2] an excellent imitation of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal.° It is in truth not easy to say whether the palm belongs to the ancient or to the modern poet. The couplets in which the fall of Wolsey° is described, though lofty and sonorous, are feeble when compared with the wonderful lines which bring before us all Rome in tumult on the day of the fall of Sejanus,° the laurels on the doorposts, the white bull stalking towards the Capitol, the statues rolling down from their pedestals, the flatterers of the disgraced minister running to see him dragged with a hook through the streets, and to have a kick at his

Second satire: *Vanity of Human Wishes.*

[1] Note, p. 61.

[2] List of Works, 7, p. xxviii.; Johnson's Ideals, § 1, p. xix.

carcase before it is hurled into the Tiber.[1] It must be owned too that in the concluding passage the Christian moralist has not made the most of his advantages, and has fallen decidedly short of the sublimity of his Pagan model. On the other hand, Juvenal's Hannibal° must yield to Johnson's Charles;[2] and Johnson's vigorous and pathetic enumeration of the miseries of a literary life[3] must be allowed to be superior to Juvenal's lamentation over the fate of Demosthenes° and Cicero.°

21. For the copyright° of the Vanity of Human Wishes Johnson received only fifteen guineas.

22. A few days after the publication of this poem, his tragedy, begun many years before, was brought on the stage. His pupil, David Garrick,° had, in 1741, made his appearance on a humble stage in Goodman's Fields,° had at once risen to the first place among actors, and was now, after several years of almost uninterrupted success, manager of Drury Lane° Theatre. The relation between him and his old preceptor was of a very singular kind. They repelled each other strongly, and yet attracted each other strongly. Nature had made them of very different clay; and circumstances had fully brought out the natural peculiarities of both. Sudden prosperity had turned Garrick's head. Continued adversity had soured Johnson's temper. Johnson saw, with more envy than became so great a man, the villa, the plate, the china, the Brussels carpet which the little mimic had got by repeating, with grimaces and gesticulations, what wiser men had written; and the exquisitely sensitive vanity of Garrick was galled by the thought that,

Relations with Garrick.

[1] Note, p. 62. [2] Note, p. 63. [3] Note, p. 63.

while all the rest of the world was applauding him, he could obtain from one morose cynic, whose opinion it was impossible to despise, scarcely any compliment not acidulated with scorn. Yet the two Lichfield men had so many early recollections in common, and sympathised with each other on so many points on which they sympathised with nobody else in the vast population of the capital, that, though the master was often provoked by the monkey-like impertinence of the pupil, and the pupil by the bearish rudeness of the master, they remained friends till they were parted by death. Garrick now brought Irene[1] out, with alterations sufficient to displease the author, yet not sufficient to make the piece pleasing to the audience. The public, however, listened with little emotion, but with much civility, to five acts of monotonous declamation. After nine representations the play was withdrawn. It is, indeed, altogether unsuited to the stage, and, even when perused in the closet, will be found hardly worthy of the author. He had not the slightest notion of what blank verse should be. A change in the last syllable of every other line would make the versification of the Vanity of Human Wishes closely resemble the versification of Irene. The poet, however, cleared, by his benefit nights, and by the sale of the copyright of his tragedy, about three hundred pounds, then a great sum in his estimation.

Tragedy: *Irene.*

23. About a year after the representation of Irene, he began to publish a series of short essays on morals, manners, and literature. This species of composition had been brought into fashion by the success of the

1 List of Works, 8, p. xxviii.; Johnson's Ideals, § 2, p. xx.

Tatler,[1] and by the still more brilliant success of the Spectator.[1] A crowd of small writers had vainly attempted to rival Addison.° The Lay Monastery, the Censor, the Freethinker, the Plain Dealer, the Champion,[1] and other works of the same kind, had had their short day. None of them had obtained a permanent place in our literature; and they are now to be found only in the libraries of the curious. At length Johnson undertook the adventure in which so many aspirants had failed. In the thirty-sixth year after the appearance of the last number of the Spectator appeared the first number of the Rambler.[2] From March 1750 to March 1752, this paper continued to come out every Tuesday and Saturday.

Periodical essays: *The Rambler;*

24. From the first the Rambler was enthusiastically admired by a few eminent men. Richardson,° when only five numbers had appeared, pronounced it equal, if not superior, to the Spectator. Young° and Hartley° expressed their approbation not less warmly. Bubb Dodington,[3] among whose many faults indifference to the claims of genius and learning cannot be reckoned, solicited the acquaintance of the writer. In consequence probably of the good offices of Dodington, who was then the confidential adviser of Prince Frederic,[3] two of his Royal Highness's gentlemen carried a gracious message to the printing-office, and ordered seven copies for Leicester House.° But these overtures seem to have been very coldly received. Johnson had had enough of the patronage of the great to last him all

its rating by contemporaries

[1] List of Periodicals, p. xxx. [2] List of Periodicals, 10, p. xxx.
[3] p. xvi., "Fall of Walpole."

his life, and was not disposed to haunt any other door as he had haunted the door of Chesterfield.°

25. By the public the Rambler was at first very coldly received. Though the price of a number was only twopence, the sale did not amount to five hundred. The profits were therefore very small. But as soon as the flying leaves were collected and reprinted they became popular. The author lived to see thirteen thousand copies spread over England alone. Separate editions were published for the Scotch and Irish markets. A large party pronounced the style perfect, so absolutely perfect that in some essays it would be impossible for the writer himself to alter a single word for the better. Another party, not less numerous, vehemently accused him of having corrupted the purity of the English tongue. The best critics admitted that his diction was too monotonous, too obviously artificial, and now and then turgid even to absurdity. But they did justice to the acuteness of his observations on morals and manners, to the constant precision and frequent brilliancy of his language, to the weighty and magnificent eloquence of many serious passages, and to the solemn yet pleasing humour of some of the lighter papers. On the question of precedence between Addison° and Johnson, a question which, seventy years ago, was much disputed, posterity has pronounced a decision from which there is no appeal. Sir Roger, his chaplain and his butler, Will Wimble and Will Honeycomb, the Vision of Mirza, the Journal of the Retired Citizen, the Everlasting Club, the Dunmow Flitch, the Loves of Hilpah and Shalum, the Visit to the Exchange, and the Visit to

and by posterity.

the Abbey, are known to everybody.[1] But many men and women, even of highly cultivated minds, are unacquainted with Squire Bluster and Mrs. Busy, Quisquilius and Venustulus, the Allegory of Wit and Learning, the Chronicle of the Revolutions of a Garret, and the sad fate of Aningait and Ajut.[2]

26. The last Rambler was written in a sad and gloomy hour. Mrs. Johnson had been given over by the physicians. Three days later she died. She left her husband almost broken-hearted. Many people had been surprised to see a man of his genius and learning stooping to every drudgery, and denying himself almost every comfort, for the purpose of supplying a silly, affected old woman with superfluities, which she accepted with but little gratitude. But all his affection had been concentrated on her. He had neither brother nor sister, neither son nor daughter. To him she was beautiful as the Gunnings,° and witty as Lady Mary.[3] Her opinion of his writings was more important to him than the voice of the pit of Drury Lane° Theatre or the judgment of the Monthly Review.[4] The chief support which had sustained him through the most arduous labour of his life was the hope that she would enjoy the fame and the profit which he anticipated from his Dictionary. She was gone ; and in that vast labyrinth of streets, peopled by eight hundred thousand human beings, he was alone. Yet it was necessary for him to set himself, as he expressed it, doggedly to work. After three more laborious years, the Dictionary was at length complete.

Death of Mrs. Johnson.

[1] Note, p. 64.
[2] Note, p. 64.
[3] Index, "Montagu."
[4] List of Periodicals, 9, p. xxx.

27. It had been generally supposed that this great work would be dedicated to the eloquent and accomplished nobleman to whom the prospectus had been addressed. He well knew the value of such a compliment; and therefore, when the day of publication drew near, he exerted himself to soothe, by a show of zealous and at the same time of delicate and judicious kindness, the pride which he had so cruelly wounded. Since the Ramblers had ceased to appear, the town had been entertained by a journal called The World,[1] to which many men of high rank and fashion contributed. In two successive numbers of The World the Dictionary was, to use the modern phrase, puffed with wonderful skill. The writings of Johnson were warmly praised. It was proposed that he should be invested with the authority of a Dictator, nay, of a Pope, over our language, and that his decisions about the meaning and the spelling of words should be received as final. His two folios, it was said, would of course be bought by everybody who could afford to buy them. It was soon known that these papers were written by Chesterfield.° But the just resentment of Johnson was not to be so appeased. In a letter written with singular energy and dignity of thought and language, he repelled the tardy advances of his patron.[2] The Dictionary came forth without a dedication. In the preface the author truly declared that he owed nothing to the great, and described the difficulties with which he had been left to struggle so forcibly and pathetically that the ablest and most malevolent of all the enemies of his fame,

Letter to Chesterfield.

[1] List of Periodicals, 12, p. xxx. [2] Note, p. 64.

Horne Tooke,° never could read that passage without tears.[1]

28. The public, on this occasion, did Johnson full justice, and something more than justice. The best lexicographer may well be content if his productions are received by the world with cold esteem. But Johnson's Dictionary[2] was hailed with an enthusiasm such as no similar work has ever excited. It was indeed the first dictionary which could be read with pleasure. The definitions show so much acuteness of thought and command of language, and the passages quoted from poets, divines and philosophers are so skilfully selected, that a leisure hour may always be very agreeably spent in turning over the pages.[3] The faults of the book resolve themselves, for the most part, into one great fault. Johnson was a wretched etymologist. He knew little or nothing of any Teutonic° language except English, which indeed, as he wrote it, was scarcely a Teutonic language;[4] and thus he was absolutely at the mercy of Junius° and Skinner.

The *Dictionary;* its merits and defects.

29. The Dictionary, though it raised Johnson's fame, added nothing to his pecuniary means. The fifteen hundred guineas which the booksellers had agreed to pay him had been advanced and spent before the last sheets issued from the press. It is painful to relate that, twice in the course of the year which followed the publication of this great work, he was arrested and carried to spunging-houses,° and that he was twice indebted for his liberty to his excellent friend Richardson.[5]

Financial difficulties.

[1] Note, p. 65. [2] List of Works, 10, p. xxviii.
[3] Note, p. 66. [4] Note, p. 66. [5] Note, p. 66.

It was still necessary for the man who had been formally saluted by the highest authority as Dictator of the English language to supply his wants by constant toil. He abridged his Dictionary. He proposed to bring out an edition of Shakspeare by subscription; and many subscribers sent in their names and laid down their money; but he soon found the task so little to his taste that he turned to more attractive employments. He contributed many papers to a new monthly journal, which was called the Literary Magazine.[1] Few of these papers have much interest; but among them was the very best thing that he ever wrote, a masterpiece both of reasoning and of satirical pleasantry, the review of Jenyns's° Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil.

30. In the spring of 1758 Johnson put forth the first of a series of essays, entitled The Idler.[2] During two years these essays continued to appear weekly. They were eagerly read, widely circulated, and, indeed, impudently pirated, while they were still in the original form, and had a large sale when collected into volumes. The Idler may be described as a second part of the Rambler, somewhat livelier and somewhat weaker than the first part.[3] Periodical essays: *The Idler.*

31. While Johnson was busied with his Idlers, his mother, who had accomplished her ninetieth year, died at Lichfield.° It was long since he had seen her; but he had not failed to contribute largely, out of his small means, to her comfort. In order to defray the charges of her funeral, and to pay some debts which she Romance: *Rasselas;*

[1] List of Periodicals, 14, p. xxx. [2] List of Periodicals, 15, p. xxx.
[3] Note, p. 66.

had left, he wrote a little book in a single week, and sent off the sheets to the press without reading them over. A hundred pounds were paid him for the copyright; and the purchasers had great cause to be pleased with their bargain; for the book was Rasselas.[1]

its reception,

32. The success of Rasselas was great, though such ladies as Miss Lydia Languish° must have been grievously disappointed when they found that the new volume from the circulating library was little more than a dissertation on the author's favourite theme, the Vanity of Human Wishes; that the Prince of Abyssinia° was without a mistress, and the Princess without a lover; and that the story set the hero and the heroine down exactly where it had taken them up. The style was the subject of much eager controversy. The Monthly Review and the Critical Review[2] took different sides. Many readers pronounced the writer a pompous pedant, who would never use a word of two syllables where it was possible to use a word of six, and who could not make a waiting-woman relate her adventures without balancing every noun with another noun, and every epithet with another epithet. Another party, not less zealous, cited with delight numerous passages in which weighty meaning was expressed with accuracy and illustrated with splendour. And both the censure and the praise were merited.

33. About the plan of Rasselas little was said by the critics; and yet the faults of the plan might seem to invite severe criticism. Johnson has frequently blamed Shakspeare for neglecting the proprieties of time and place, and for ascribing to one age or nation the manners

[1] List of Works, 12, p. xxix. [2] List of Periodicals, 9, 13, p. xxx.

and opinions of another. Yet Shakspeare has not sinned in this way more grievously than Johnson. Rasselas and Imlac, Nekayah and Pekuah, are evidently meant to be Abyssinians of the eighteenth century: for the Europe which Imlac describes is the Europe of the eighteenth century; and the inmates of the Happy Valley talk familiarly of that law of gravitation which Newton° discovered, and which was not fully received even at Cambridge till the eighteenth century. What a real company of Abyssinians would have been may be learned from Bruce's° Travels. But Johnson, not content with turning filthy savages, ignorant of their letters, and gorged with raw steaks cut from living cows, into philosophers as eloquent and enlightened as himself or his friend Burke,° and into ladies as highly accomplished as Mrs. Lennox° or Mrs. Sheridan,° transferred the whole domestic system of England to Egypt. Into a land of harems, a land of polygamy, a land where women are married without ever being seen, he introduced the flirtations and jealousies of our ballrooms. In a land where there is boundless liberty of divorce, wedlock is described as the indissoluble compact. "A youth and maiden meeting by chance, or brought together by artifice, exchange glances, reciprocate civilities, go home, and dream of each other. Such," says Rasselas, "is the common process of marriage." Such it may have been, and may still be, in London, but assuredly not at Cairo. A writer who was guilty of such improprieties had little right to blame the poet[1] who made Hector° quote Aristotle,° and represented Julio Romano° as flourishing in the days of the oracle of Delphi.°

and its inconsistencies.

[1] Note, p. 66.

34. By such exertions as have been described, Johnson supported himself till the year 1762. In that year a great change in his circumstances took place. He had from a child been an enemy of the reigning dynasty. His Jacobite[1] prejudices had been exhibited with little disguise both in his works and in his conversation. Even in his massy and elaborate Dictionary, he had, with a strange want of taste and judgment, inserted bitter and contumelious reflections on the Whig party. The excise[2] which was a favourite resource of Whig financiers, he had designated as a hateful tax. He had railed against the commissioners of excise in language so coarse that they had seriously thought of prosecuting him. He had with difficulty been prevented from holding up the Lord Privy Seal° by name as an example of the meaning of the word "renegade."[3] A pension he had defined as pay given to a state hireling to betray his country; a pensioner, as a slave of state hired by a stipend to obey a master. It seemed unlikely that the author of these definitions would himself be pensioned. But that was a time of wonders. George the Third had ascended the throne; and had, in the course of a few months, disgusted many of the old friends and conciliated many of the old enemies of his house. The city was becoming mutinous. Oxford was becoming loyal. Cavendishes[4] and Bentincks[4] were murmuring. Somersets° and Wyndhams° were hastening to kiss hands. The head of the treasury was now Lord Bute,[4] who was a Tory, and could have no objection to Johnson's Tory-

Political changes, 1762.

[1] p. xiii., note.
[2] p. xvi.
[3] Note, p. 67.
[4] p. xvii., "Reign of Geo. III."

ism. Bute wished to be thought a patron of men of letters; and Johnson was one of the most eminent and one of the most needy men of letters in Europe. A pension of three hundred a year was graciously offered, and with very little hesitation accepted.[1]

35. This event produced a change in Johnson's whole way of life. For the first time since his boyhood he no longer felt the daily goad urging him to the daily toil. He was at liberty, after thirty years of anxiety and drudgery, to indulge his constitutional indolence, to lie in bed till two in the afternoon, and to sit up talking till four in the morning, without fearing either the printer's devil or the sheriff's officer. Relief from poverty.

36. One laborious task indeed he had bound himself to perform. He had received large subscriptions for his promised edition of Shakspeare; he had lived on those subscriptions during some years; and he could not without disgrace omit to perform his part of the contract. His friends repeatedly exhorted him to make an effort; and he repeatedly resolved to do so. But, notwithstanding their exhortations and his resolutions, month followed month, year followed year, and nothing was done. He prayed fervently against his idleness; he determined, as often as he received the sacrament, that he would no longer doze away and trifle away his time; but the spell under which he lay resisted prayer and sacrament. His private notes at this time are made up of self-reproaches. "My indolence," he wrote on Easter eve in 1764, "has sunk into grosser sluggishness. A kind of strange oblivion has overspread The *Shakespeare*: its belated appearance.

[1] Note, p. 67.

me, so that I know not what has become of the last year." Easter 1765 came, and found him still in the same state. "My time," he wrote, "has been unprofitably spent, and seems as a dream that has left nothing behind. My memory grows confused, and I know not how the days pass over me."[1] Happily for his honour, the charm which held him captive was at length broken by no gentle or friendly hand. He had been weak enough to pay serious attention to a story about a ghost which haunted a house in Cock Lane,° and had actually gone himself, with some of his friends, at one in the morning, to St. John's Church, Clerkenwell,° in the hope of receiving a communication from the perturbed spirit. But the spirit, though adjured with all solemnity, remained obstinately silent; and it soon appeared that a naughty girl of eleven had been amusing herself by making fools of so many philosophers.[2] Churchill,° who, confident in his powers, drunk with popularity, and burning with party spirit, was looking for some man of established fame and Tory politics to insult, celebrated the Cock Lane Ghost in three cantos, nicknamed Johnson Pomposo, asked where the book was which had been so long promised and so liberally paid for, and directly accused the great moralist of cheating.[3] This terrible word proved effectual; and in October 1765 appeared, after a delay of nine years, the new edition of Shakspeare.[4]

37. This publication saved Johnson's character for honesty, but added nothing to the fame of his abilities and learning. The preface, though it contains some

[1] Note, p. 67.
[2] Note, p. 67.
[3] Note, p. 67.
[4] List of Works, 13, p. xxix.

good passages, is not in his best manner.[1] The most valuable notes are those in which he had an opportunity of showing how attentively he had during many years observed human life and human nature. its merits; The best specimen is the note on the character of Polonius.° Nothing so good is to be found even in Wilhelm Meister's° admirable examination of Hamlet.° But here praise must end. It would be difficult to name a more slovenly, a more worthless, edition of any great classic. its defects; The reader may turn over play after play without finding one happy conjectural emendation, or one ingenious and satisfactory explanation of a passage which had baffled preceding commentators. Johnson had, in his prospectus, told the world that he was peculiarly fitted for the task which he had undertaken, because he had, as a lexicographer, been under the necessity of taking a wider view of the English language than any of his predecessors. That his knowledge of our literature was extensive is indisputable. But, unfortunately, he had altogether neglected that very part of our literature with which it is especially desirable that an editor of Shakspeare should be conversant. It is dangerous to assert a negative. Yet little will be risked by the assertion that in the two folio volumes of the English Dictionary there is not a single passage quoted from any dramatist of the Elizabethan age, except Shakspeare and Ben.[2] Even from Ben the quotations are few. Johnson might easily, in a few months, have made himself well acquainted with every old play that was extant. But it never seems to have occurred to him that this was a

[1] Note, p. 68. [2] p. x., "Shakespeare and Ben Jonson."

necessary preparation for the work which he had undertaken.[1] He would doubtless have admitted that it would be the height of absurdity in a man who was not familiar with the works of Æschylus° and Euripides to publish an edition of Sophocles. Yet he ventured to publish an edition of Shakspeare, without having ever in his life, as far as can be discovered, read a single scene of Massinger, Ford, Decker, Webster, Marlow, Beaumont, or Fletcher.[2] His detractors were noisy and scurrilous. Those who most loved and honoured him had little to say in praise of the manner in which he had discharged the duty of a commentator. He had, however, acquitted himself of a debt which had long lain heavy on his conscience ; and he sunk back into the repose from which the sting of satire had roused him. He long continued to live upon the fame which he had already won. He was honoured by the University° of Oxford with a Doctor's degree, by the Royal Academy° with a professorship, and by the King with an interview, in which his Majesty most graciously expressed a hope that so excellent a writer would not cease to write. In the interval, however, between 1765 and 1775 Johnson published only two or three political tracts,[3] the longest of which he could have produced in forty-eight hours, if he had worked as he worked on the Life of Savage and on Rasselas.

its reception.

38. But, though his pen was now idle, his tongue was active. The influence exercised by his conversation, directly upon those with whom he lived, and indirectly

[1] Note, p. 68. [2] p. x., "Shakespeare and Ben Jonson."
[3] List of Periodicals, 16–19, p. xxx.

on the whole literary world, was altogether without a parallel. His colloquial talents were indeed of the highest order. He had strong sense, quick discernment, wit, humour, immense knowledge of literature and of life, and an infinite store of curious anecdotes. As respected style, he spoke far better than he wrote. Every sentence which dropped from his lips was as correct in structure as the most nicely balanced period of the Rambler. But in his talk there were no pompous triads, and little more than a fair proportion of words in *osity* and *ation*. All was simplicity, ease, and vigour. He uttered his short, weighty, and pointed sentences with a power of voice, and a justness and energy of emphasis, of which the effect was rather increased than diminished by the rollings of his huge form, and by the asthmatic gaspings and puffings in which the peals of his eloquence generally ended. Nor did the laziness which made him unwilling to sit down to his desk prevent him from giving instruction or entertainment orally. To discuss questions of taste, of learning, of casuistry, in language so exact and so forcible that it might have been printed without the alteration of a word, was to him no exertion, but a pleasure. He loved, as he said, to fold his legs and have his talk out. He was ready to bestow the overflowings of his full mind on anybody who would start a subject, on a fellow-passenger in a stage-coach, or on the person who sate at the same table with him in an eating house. But his conversation was nowhere so brilliant and striking as when he was surrounded by a few friends, whose abilities and knowledge enabled them, as he once expressed it, to send him back every ball that he

Johnson's primacy in letters.

threw. Some of these, in 1764, formed themselves into a club, which gradually became a formidable power in the commonwealth of letters. The verdicts pronounced by this conclave on new books were speedily known over all London, and were sufficient to sell off a whole edition in a day, or to condemn the sheets to the service of the trunk-maker and the pastry-cook. Nor shall we think this strange when we consider what great and various talents and acquirements met in the little fraternity. Goldsmith° was the representative of poetry and light literature, Reynolds° of the arts, Burke° of political eloquence and political philosophy. There, too, were Gibbon,° the greatest historian, and Jones,° the greatest linguist, of the age. Garrick° brought to the meetings his inexhaustible pleasantry, his incomparable mimicry, and his consummate knowledge of stage effect. Among the most constant attendants were two high-born and high-bred gentlemen, closely bound together by friendship, but of widely different characters and habits; Bennet Langton,° distinguished by his skill in Greek literature, by the orthodoxy of his opinions, and by the sanctity of his life; and Topham Beauclerk,° renowned for his amours, his knowledge of the gay world, his fastidious taste, and his sarcastic wit. To predominate over such a society was not easy. Yet even over such a society Johnson predominated. Burke might indeed have disputed the supremacy to which others were under the necessity of submitting. But Burke, though not generally a very patient listener, was content to take the second part when Johnson was present; and the club itself, consisting of so many

"The Club."

JAMES BOSWELL

FROM THE PORTRAIT BY SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

eminent men, is to this day popularly designated as Johnson's Club.[1]

39. Among the members of this celebrated body was one to whom it has owed the greater part of its celebrity, yet who was regarded with little respect by his brethren, and had not without difficulty obtained a seat among them. This was James Boswell,° a young Scotch lawyer, heir to an honourable name and a fair estate. That he was a coxcomb and a bore, weak, vain, pushing, curious, garrulous, was obvious to all who were acquainted with him. That he could not reason, that he had no wit, no humour, no eloquence, is apparent from his writings. And yet his writings are read beyond the Mississippi, and under the Southern Cross, and are likely to be read as long as the English exists, either as a living or as a dead language. Nature had made him a slave and an idolater. His mind resembled those creepers which the botanists call parasites, and which can subsist only by clinging round the stems and imbibing the juices of stronger plants. He must have fastened himself on somebody. He might have fastened himself on Wilkes,[2] and have become the fiercest patriot in the Bill of Rights Society. He might have fastened himself on Whitfield,° and have become the loudest field preacher among the Calvinistic Methodists. In a happy hour he fastened himself on Johnson. The pair might seem ill-matched. For Johnson had early been prejudiced against Boswell's country.[3] To a man of Johnson's strong understanding and irritable temper, the silly egotism and adulation of

Relations with Boswell.

[1] Note, p. 68.

[2] p. xvii., "Reign of George III."

[3] Note, p. 61.

Boswell must have been as teasing as the constant buzz of a fly. Johnson hated to be questioned; and Boswell was eternally catechising him on all kinds of subjects, and sometimes propounded such questions as, "What would you do, sir, if you were locked up in a tower with a baby?" Johnson was a water-drinker; and Boswell was a wine-bibber, and indeed little better than an habitual sot. It was impossible that there should be perfect harmony between two such companions. Indeed, the great man was sometimes provoked into fits of passion, in which he said things that the small man, during a few hours, seriously resented. Every quarrel, however, was soon made up. During twenty years the disciple continued to worship the master: the master continued to scold the disciple, to sneer at him, and to love him. The two friends ordinarily resided at a great distance from each other. Boswell practised in the Parliament House of Edinburgh, and could pay only occasional visits to London. During those visits his chief business was to watch Johnson, to discover all Johnson's habits, to turn the conversation to subjects about which Johnson was likely to say something remarkable, and to fill quarto note books with minutes of what Johnson had said. In this way were gathered the materials out of which was afterward constructed the most interesting biographical work in the world.[1]

40. Soon after the club began to exist, Johnson formed a connexion less important indeed to his fame, but much more important to his happiness, than his connexion with Boswell. Henry Thrale,° one of the most opulent brewers

[1] See p. 55.

in the kingdom, a man of sound and cultivated understanding, rigid principles, and liberal spirit, was married to one of those clever, kind-hearted, engaging, vain, pert young women, who are perpetually doing or saying what is not exactly right, but who, do or say what they may, are always agreeable. In 1765 the Thrales became acquainted with Johnson; and the acquaintance ripened fast into friendship. They were astonished and delighted by the brilliancy of his conversation. They were flattered by finding that a man so widely celebrated preferred their house to any other in London. Even the peculiarities which seemed to unfit him for civilised society, his gesticulations, his rollings, his puffings, his mutterings, the strange way in which he put on his clothes, the ravenous eagerness with which he devoured his dinner, his fits of melancholy, his fits of anger, his frequent rudeness, his occasional ferocity, increased the interest which his new associates took in him. For these things were the cruel marks left behind by a life which had been one long conflict with disease and with adversity. In a vulgar hack writer such oddities would have excited only disgust. But in a man of genius, learning, and virtue their effect was to add pity to admiration and esteem. Johnson soon had an apartment at the brewery in Southwark,° and a still more pleasant apartment at the villa of his friends on Streatham° Common. A large part of every year he passed in those abodes, abodes which must have seemed magnificent and luxurious indeed, when compared with the dens in which he had generally been lodged. But his chief pleasures were derived from what the astronomer of his Abyssinian

Relations with the Thrales.

tale called "the endearing elegance of female friendship." Mrs. Thrale rallied him, soothed him, coaxed him, and, if she sometimes provoked him by her flippancy, made ample amends by listening to his reproofs with angelic sweetness of temper. When he was diseased in body and in mind, she was the most tender of nurses. No comfort that wealth could purchase, no contrivance that womanly ingenuity, set to work by womanly compassion, could devise, was wanting to his sick room. He requited her kindness by an affection pure as the affection of a father, yet delicately tinged with a gallantry, which, though awkward, must have been more flattering than the attentions of a crowd of the fools who gloried in the names, now obsolete, of Buck° and Maccaroni.° It should seem that a full half of Johnson's life, during about sixteen years, was passed under the roof of the Thrales. He accompanied the family sometimes to Bath,° and sometimes to Brighton,° once to Wales, and once to Paris.

Johnson's London household.

But he had at the same time a house in one of the narrow and gloomy courts on the north of Fleet Street.° In the garrets was his library, a large and miscellaneous collection of books, falling to pieces and begrimed with dust. On a lower floor he sometimes, but very rarely, regaled a friend with a plain dinner, a veal pie, or a leg of lamb and spinach, and a rice pudding. Nor was the dwelling uninhabited during his long absences. It was the home of the most extraordinary assemblage of inmates that ever was brought together. At the head of the establishment Johnson had placed an old lady named Williams, whose chief recommendations were her blindness and her poverty. But, in spite

of her murmurs and reproaches, he gave an asylum to another lady who was as poor as herself, Mrs. Desmoulins, whose family he had known many years before in Staffordshire. Room was found for the daughter of Mrs. Desmoulins, and for another destitute damsel, who was generally addressed as Miss Carmichael, but whom her generous host called Polly. An old quack doctor named Levett, who bled and dosed coal-heavers and hackney coachmen, and received for fees crusts of bread, bits of bacon, glasses of gin, and sometimes a little copper, completed this strange menagerie. All these poor creatures were at constant war with each other, and with Johnson's negro servant Frank. Sometimes, indeed, they transferred their hostilities from the servant to the master, complained that a better table was not kept for them, and railed or maundered till their benefactor was glad to make his escape to Streatham, or to the Mitre Tavern.° And yet he, who was generally the haughtiest and most irritable of mankind, who was but too prompt to resent anything which looked like a slight on the part of a purse-proud bookseller, or of a noble and powerful patron, bore patiently from mendicants, who, but for his bounty, must have gone to the workhouse, insults more provoking than those for which he had knocked down Osborne and bidden defiance to Chesterfield. Year after year Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Desmoulins, Polly and Levett, continued to torment him and to live upon him.[1]

41. The course of life which has been described was interrupted in Johnson's sixty-fourth year by an important event. He had early read an account of the Hebrides,°

[1] Note, p. 68.

and had been much interested by learning that there was so near him a land peopled by a race which was still as rude and simple as in the middle ages. A wish to become intimately acquainted with a state of society so utterly unlike all that he had ever seen frequently crossed his mind. But it is not probable that his curiosity would have overcome his habitual sluggishness, and his love of the smoke, the mud, and the cries of London, had not Boswell importuned him to attempt the adventure, and offered to be his squire. At length, in August 1773, Johnson crossed the Highland line, and plunged courageously into what was then considered, by most Englishmen, as a dreary and perilous wilderness. After wandering about two months through the Celtic region, sometimes in rude boats which did not protect him from the rain, and sometimes on small shaggy ponies which could hardly bear his weight, he returned to his old haunts with a mind full of new images and new theories. During the following year he employed himself in recording his adventures. About the beginning of 1775, his Journey to the Hebrides[1] was published, and was, during some weeks, the chief subject of conversation in all circles in which any attention was paid to literature. The book is still read with pleasure. The narrative is entertaining; the speculations, whether sound or unsound, are always ingenious; and the style, though too stiff and pompous, is somewhat easier and more graceful than that of his early writings. His prejudice against the Scotch had at length become little more than matter of jest; and whatever remained

Tour in Scotland.

Travels: *Journey to the Western Islands,*

[1] List of works, 18, p. xxix.; Johnson's Ideals, § 7, p. xxiii.

of the old feeling had been effectually removed by the kind and respectful hospitality with which he had been received in every part of Scotland. It was, of course, not to be expected that an Oxonian° Tory should praise the Presbyterian polity and ritual,[1] or that an eye accustomed to the hedgerows and parks of England should not be struck by the bareness of Berwickshire and East Lothian. But even in censure Johnson's tone is not unfriendly. The most enlightened Scotchmen, with Lord Mansfield° at their head, were well pleased. But some foolish and ignorant Scotchmen were moved to anger by a little unpalatable truth which was mingled with much eulogy, and assailed him whom they chose to consider as the enemy of their country with libels much more dishonourable to their country than anything that he had ever said or written. They published paragraphs in the newspapers, articles in the magazines, sixpenny pamphlets, five shilling books. One scribbler abused Johnson for being blear-eyed; another for being a pensioner; a third informed the world that one of the Doctor's uncles had been convicted of felony in Scotland, and had found that there was in that country one tree capable of supporting the weight of an Englishman. Macpherson,° whose Fingal had been proved in the Journey to be an impudent forgery, threatened to take vengeance with a cane. The only effect of this threat was that Johnson reiterated the charge of forgery in the most contemptuous terms, and walked about, during some time, with a cudgel, which, if the impostor had not been too wise to encounter it, would assuredly

and its reception.

[1] p. xi.

have descended upon him, to borrow the sublime language of his own epic poem, "like a hammer on the red son of the furnace."

Attitude toward detractors.

42. Of other assailants Johnson took no notice whatever. He had early resolved never to be drawn into controversy; and he adhered to his resolution with a steadfastness which is the more extraordinary because he was, both intellectually and morally, of the stuff of which controversialists are made. In conversation he was a singularly eager, acute, and pertinacious disputant. When at a loss for good reasons, he had recourse to sophistry; and, when heated by altercation, he made unsparing use of sarcasm and invective. But, when he took his pen in his hand, his whole character seemed to be changed. A hundred bad writers misrepresented him and reviled him; but not one of the hundred could boast of having been thought by him worthy of a refutation, or even of a retort. The Kenricks, Campbells, MacNicols, and Hendersons, did their best to annoy him, in the hope that he would give them importance by answering them. But the reader will in vain search his works for any allusion to Kenrick or Campbell, to MacNicol or Henderson. One Scotchman, bent on vindicating the fame of Scotch learning, defied him to the combat in a detestable Latin hexameter.

"Maxime, si tu vis, cupio contendere tecum."[1]

But Johnson took no notice of the challenge. He had learned, both from his own observation and from literary history, in which he was deeply read, that the place of

[1] Note, p. 68.

DR. JOHNSON IN HIS TRAVELLING DRESS

books in the public estimation is fixed, not by what is written about them, but by what is written in them; and that an author whose works are likely to live is very unwise if he stoops to wrangle with detractors whose works are certain to die. He always maintained that fame was a shuttlecock which could be kept up only by being beaten back, as well as beaten forward, and which would soon fall if there were only one battledore. No saying was oftener in his mouth than that fine apophthegm of Bentley,° that no man was ever written down but by himself.

43. Unhappily, a few months after the appearance of the Journey to the Hebrides, Johnson did what none of his envious assailants could have done, and, to a certain extent, succeeded in writing himself down. The disputes between England and her American colonies had reached a point at which no amicable adjustment was possible. Civil war was evidently impending; and the ministers seem to have thought that the eloquence of Johnson might, with advantage, be employed to inflame the nation against the opposition here, and against the rebels beyond the Atlantic. He had already written two or three tracts[1] in defence of the foreign and domestic policy of the Government; and those tracts, though hardly worthy of him, were much superior to the crowd of pamphlets which lay on the counters of Almon° and Stockdale. But his Taxation No Tyranny[2] was a pitiable failure. The very title was a silly phrase which can have been recommended to his choice by nothing but a jingling alliteration which he

Political tracts: *Taxation no Tyranny.*

[1] List of Periodicals, 16–18, p. xxx.

[2] *Ib.*, 19; Johnson's Ideals, § 8, p. xxiii.

ought to have despised. The arguments were such as boys use in debating societies. The pleasantry was as awkward as the gambols of a hippopotamus. Even Boswell was forced to own that, in this unfortunate piece, he could detect no trace of his master's powers. The general opinion was that the strong faculties which had produced the Dictionary and The Rambler were beginning to feel the effect of time and of disease, and that the old man would best consult his credit by writing no more.

44. But this was a great mistake. Johnson had failed, not because his mind was less vigorous than when he wrote Rasselas in the evenings of a week, but because he had foolishly chosen, or suffered others to choose for him, a subject such as he would at no time have been competent to treat. He was in no sense a statesman. He never willingly read or thought or talked about affairs of State. He loved biography, literary history, the history of manners; but political history was positively distasteful to him. The question at issue between the colonies and the mother-country was a question about which he had really nothing to say. He failed, therefore, as the greatest men must fail when they attempt to do that for which they are unfit; as Burke° would have failed if Burke had tried to write comedies like those of Sheridan°; as Reynolds° would have failed if Reynolds had tried to paint landscapes like those of Wilson.° Happily, Johnson soon had an opportunity of proving most signally that his failure was not to be ascribed to intellectual decay.

Failure as a political writer.

45. On Easter eve, 1777, some persons, deputed by a

meeting which consisted of forty of the first booksellers in London, called upon him. Though he had some scruples about doing business at that season, he received his visitors with much civility. They came to inform him that a new edition of the English poets, from Cowley° downwards, was in contemplation, and to ask him to furnish short biographical prefaces. He readily undertook the task, a task for which he was pre-eminently qualified. His knowledge of the literary history of England since the Restoration was unrivalled. That knowledge he had derived partly from books and partly from sources which had long been closed; from old Grub Street° traditions; from the talk of forgotten poetasters and pamphleteers who had long been lying in parish vaults; from the recollections of such men as Gilbert Walmesley,° who had conversed with the wits of Button°; Cibber,° who had mutilated the plays of two generations of dramatists; Orrery,° who had been admitted to the society of Swift°; and Savage,° who had rendered services of no very honourable kind to Pope.° The biographer therefore sate down to his task with a mind full of matter. He had at first intended to give only a paragraph to every minor poet, and only four or five pages to the greatest name. But the flood of anecdote and criticism overflowed the narrow channel. The work, which was originally meant to consist only of a few sheets, swelled into ten volumes, small volumes, it is true, and not closely printed. The first four appeared in 1779, the remaining six in 1781.

Biography: *Lives of the Poets*;

46. The Lives of the Poets[1] are, on the whole, the

[1] List of Works, 19, p. xxix.; Johnson's Ideals, §§ 5, 6, p. xxii.

best of Johnson's works. The narratives are as entertaining as any novel. The remarks on life and on human nature are eminently shrewd and profound. The criticisms are often excellent, and, even when grossly and provokingly unjust, well deserve to be studied. For, however erroneous they may be, they are never silly. They are the judgments of a mind trammelled by prejudice and deficient in sensibility, but vigorous and acute. They therefore generally contain a portion of valuable truth which deserves to be separated from the alloy; and, at the very worst, they mean something, a praise to which much of what is called criticism in our time has no pretensions.

their merits,

47. Savage's Life Johnson reprinted nearly as it had appeared in 1744. Whoever, after reading that life, will turn to the other lives, will be struck by the difference of style. Since Johnson had been at ease in his circumstances he had written little and had talked much. When, therefore, he, after the lapse of years, resumed his pen, the mannerism which he had contracted while he was in the constant habit of elaborate composition was less perceptible than formerly; and his diction frequently had a colloquial ease which it had formerly wanted. The improvement may be discerned by a skilful critic in the Journey to the Hebrides, and in the Lives of the Poets is so obvious that it cannot escape the notice of the most careless reader.

their superiority to earlier work,

48. Among the Lives the best are perhaps those of Cowley,° Dryden,° and Pope. The very worst is, beyond all doubt, that of Gray.°

49. This great work at once became popular. There

was, indeed, much just and much unjust censure: but even those who were loudest in blame were attracted by the book in spite of themselves. Malone° computed the gains of the publishers at five or six thousand pounds. But the writer was very poorly remunerated. Intending at first to write very short prefaces, he had stipulated for only two hundred guineas. The booksellers, when they saw how far his performance had surpassed his promise, added only another hundred. Indeed, Johnson, though he did not despise, or affect to despise, money, and though his strong sense and long experience ought to have qualified him to protect his own interests, seems to have been singularly unskilful and unlucky in his literary bargains. He was generally reputed the first English writer of his time. Yet several writers of his time sold their copyrights for sums such as he never ventured to ask. To give a single instance, Robertson° received four thousand five hundred pounds for the History of Charles V.; and it is no disrespect to the memory of Robertson to say that the History of Charles V. is both a less valuable and a less amusing book than the Lives of the Poets.[1]

and their reception.

50. Johnson was now in his seventy-second year. The infirmities of age were coming fast upon him. That inevitable event, of which he never thought without horror, was brought near to him; and his whole life was darkened by the shadow of death. He had often to pay the cruel price of longevity. Every year he lost what could never be replaced. The strange dependents to whom he had given shelter, and to whom,

Johnson's last days.

[1] Note, p. 68.

in spite of their faults, he was strongly attached by habit, dropped off one by one; and, in the silence of his home, he regretted even the noise of their scolding-matches. The kind and generous Thrale° was no more; and it would have been well if his wife had been laid beside him. But she survived to be the laughing-stock of those who had envied her, and to draw from the eyes of the old man who had loved her beyond anything in the world tears far more bitter than he would have shed over her grave. With some estimable and many agreeable qualities, she was not made to be independent. The control of a mind more steadfast than her own was necessary to her respectability. While she was restrained by her husband, a man of sense and firmness, indulgent to her taste in trifles, but always the undisputed master of his house, her worst offences had been impertinent jokes, white lies, and short fits of pettishness ending in sunny good humour. But he was gone; and she was left an opulent widow of forty, with strong sensibility, volatile fancy, and slender judgment. She soon fell in love with a music-master from Brescia,° in whom nobody but herself could discover anything to admire. Her pride, and perhaps some better feelings, struggled hard against this degrading passion. But the struggle irritated her nerves, soured her temper, and at length endangered her health. Conscious that her choice was one which Johnson could not approve, she became desirous to escape from his inspection. Her manner toward him changed. She was sometimes cold and sometimes petulant. She did not conceal her joy when he left Streatham°; she never pressed him to return; and,

Rupture with Mrs. Thrale.

HESTER LYNCH THRALE
AFTERWARD HESTER LYNCH PIOZZI

FROM THE PORTRAIT BY SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

if he came unbidden, she received him in a manner which convinced him that he was no longer a welcome guest. He took the very intelligible hints which she gave. He read, for the last time, a chapter of the Greek Testament in the library which had been formed by himself. In a solemn and tender prayer he commended the house and its inmates to the Divine protection, and, with emotions which choked his voice and convulsed his powerful frame, left forever that beloved home for the gloomy and desolate house behind Fleet Street,° where the few and evil days which still remained to him were to run out. Here, in June 1783, he had a paralytic stroke, from which, however, he recovered, and which does not appear to have at all impaired his intellectual faculties. But other maladies came thick upon him. His asthma tormented him day and night. Dropsical symptoms made their appearance. While sinking under a complication of diseases, he heard that the woman whose friendship had been the chief happiness of sixteen years of his life had married an Italian fiddler; that all London was crying shame upon her; and that the newspapers and magazines were filled with allusions to the Ephesian° matron, and the two pictures in Hamlet.° He vehemently said that he would try to forget her existence. He never uttered her name. Every memorial of her which met his eye he flung into the fire. She meanwhile fled from the laughter and hisses of her countrymen and countrywomen to a land where she was unknown, hastened across Mount Cenis,° and learned, while passing a merry Christmas of concerts and lemonade parties at Milan,° that the great man

with whose name hers is inseparably associated had ceased to exist.[1]

51. He had, in spite of much mental and much bodily affliction, clung vehemently to life. The feeling described in that fine but gloomy paper which closes the series of his Idlers seemed to grow stronger in him as his last hour drew near.[2] He fancied that he should be able to draw his breath more easily in a southern climate, and would probably have set out for Rome and Naples, but for his fear of the expense of the journey. That expense, indeed, he had the means of defraying; for he had laid up about two thousand pounds, the fruit of labours which had made the fortune of several publishers. But he was unwilling to break in upon this hoard; and he seems to have wished even to keep its existence a secret. Some of his friends hoped that the Government might be induced to increase his pension to six hundred pounds a year: but this hope was disappointed; and he resolved to stand one English winter more. That winter was his last. His legs grew weaker; his breath grew shorter; the fatal water gathered fast, in spite of incisions which he, courageous against pain, but timid against death, urged his surgeons to make deeper and deeper. Though the tender care which had mitigated his sufferings during months of sickness at Streatham was withdrawn, he was not left desolate. The ablest physicians and surgeons attended him, and refused to accept fees from him. Burke° parted from him with deep emotion. Windham° sate much in the sick-room, arranged the pillows, and sent his own servant

Final illness,

[1] Note, p. 68. [2] Note, p. 69.

to watch a night by the bed. Frances Burney,° whom the old man had cherished with fatherly kindness, stood weeping at the door; while Langton,° whose piety eminently qualified him to be an adviser and comforter at such a time, received the last pressure of his friend's hand within. When at length the moment, dreaded through so many years, came close, the dark cloud passed away from Johnson's mind. His temper became unusually patient and gentle; he ceased to think with terror of death, and of that which lies beyond death; and he spoke much of the mercy of God, and of the propitiation of Christ. In this serene frame of mind he died on the 13th of December, 1784. He was laid, a week later, in Westminster Abbey,° among the eminent men of whom he had been the historian, — Cowley° and Denham,° Dryden° and Congreve,° Gay,° Prior,° and Addison.[1]

and death.

52. Since his death the popularity of his works — the Lives of the Poets, and, perhaps, the Vanity of Human Wishes, excepted — has greatly diminished. His Dictionary has been altered by editors till it can scarcely be called his. An allusion to his Rambler or his Idler is not readily apprehended in literary circles. The fame even of Rasselas has grown somewhat dim. But, though the celebrity of the writings may have declined, the celebrity of the writer, strange to say, is as great as ever. Boswell's book has done for him more than the best of his own books could do.[2] The memory of other authors is kept alive by their works. But the memory of Johnson keeps many of his works alive. The old philosopher

Johnson, the writer;

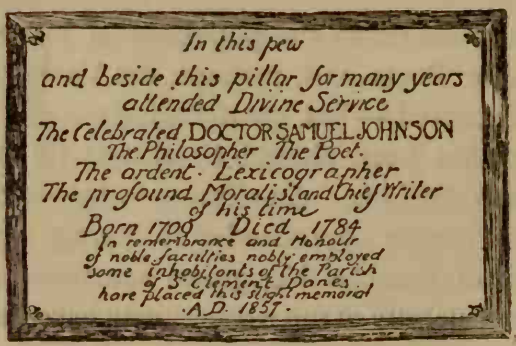
[1] Note, p. 69.

[2] See p. 55.

is still among us in the brown coat with the metal buttons and the shirt which ought to be at wash, blinking, puffing, rolling his head, drumming with his fingers, tearing his meat like a tiger, and swallowing his tea in oceans. No human being who has been more than seventy years in the grave is so well known to us.[1] And it is but just to say that our intimate acquaintance with what he would himself have called the anfractuosities[2] of his intellect and of his temper serves only to strengthen our conviction that he was both a great and a good man.

Johnson, the man.

[1] Note, p. 69. [2] Note, p. 69.



INSCRIPTION ON THE PEW IN ST. CLEMENT DANES.

MACAULAY ON BOSWELL.

In 1831, twenty-five years before the *Life* reprinted in this volume, Macaulay wrote an *Essay on Boswell's Johnson* (known also as the *Essay on Johnson*), inspired by a new edition of that famous biography. It has probably had more readers than the later sketch — a fact to be regretted, since the earlier essay is sweepingly injurious to the memory of Johnson and of his disciple. As in the *Essay on Milton*, the effect of its remarkable dash and vigor is marred by exaggeration, partial emphasis, and shallow reasoning. These qualities are particularly noticeable in that portion of the essay which elaborates the brilliant but untenable paradox that Boswell wrote one of the greatest of biographies because he was one of the greatest of fools. A few quotations will show the nature of Macaulay's argument: —

"The *Life of Johnson* is assuredly a great, a very great work. Homer is not more decidedly the first of heroic poets, Shakespeare is not more decidedly the first of dramatists, Demosthenes is not more decidedly the first of orators, than Boswell is the first of biographers. . . . We are not sure that there is in the whole history of the human intellect so strange a phenomenon as this book. Many of the greatest men that ever lived have written biography. Boswell was one of the smallest men that ever lived, and he has beaten them all. He was . . . a man of the meanest and feeblest intellect. . . . He was the laughing-stock of the whole of that brilliant society which has owed to him the greater part of its fame. He was always laying himself at the feet of some

eminent man, and begging to be spit upon and trampled upon. . . . Every thing which another man would have hidden, every thing the publication of which would have made another man hang himself, was matter of gay and clamorous exultation to his weak and diseased mind. . . .

"That such a man should have written one of the best books in the world is strange enough. But this is not all. Many persons who have conducted themselves foolishly in active life, and whose conversation has indicated no superior powers of mind, have left us valuable works. . . . But these men attained literary eminence in spite of their weaknesses. Boswell attained it by reason of his weaknesses. If he had not been a great fool, he would never have been a great writer. Without all the qualities which made him the jest and the torment of those among whom he lived, without the officiousness, the inquisitiveness, the effrontery, the toad-eating, the insensibility to all reproof, he never could have produced so excellent a book. . . .

"Of the talents which ordinarily raise men to eminence as writers, Boswell had absolutely none. . . . Logic, eloquence, wit, taste, all those things which are generally considered as making a book valuable, were utterly wanting to him. He had, indeed, a quick observation and a retentive memory. These qualities, if he had been a man of sense and virtue, would scarcely of themselves have sufficed to make him conspicuous; but, because he was a dunce, a parasite, and a coxcomb, they have made him immortal."

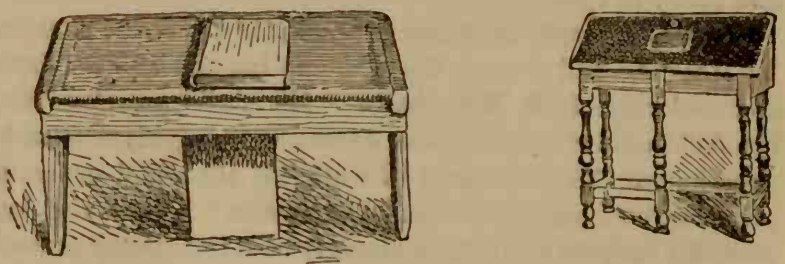
Only a few months elapsed before Macaulay's startling theory was completely demolished by Thomas Carlyle, in a famous essay occasioned by the same edition of Boswell's *Johnson*. "The world," writes Carlyle of Boswell, "has been but unjust to him; discerning only the outer terrestrial and often sordid mass; without eye, as it generally is, for his inner divine secret. . . . Nay, sometimes a strange enough hypothesis has been started of him; as if it were in virtue

even of these same bad qualities that he did his good work; as if it were the very fact of his being among the worst men in the world that had enabled him to write one of the best books therein! Falser hypothesis, we may venture to say, never rose in human soul. *Bad* is by its virtue negative, and can do *nothing;* whatsoever enables us to *do* anything is by its very nature *good.* . . . Boswell wrote a good book because he had a heart and an eye to discern wisdom, and an utterance to render it forth; because of his free insight, his lively talent, above all, of his love and childlike open-mindedness. . . . Let every one of us cling to this last article of faith, and know it as the beginning of all knowledge worth the name: That neither James Boswell's good book, nor any other good thing, in any time or in any place, was, is, or can be performed by any man in virtue of his *badness*, but always and solely in spite thereof."

Carlyle has partly answered Macaulay in the above citation, but it may be well to quote the tribute to Boswell by Macaulay's contemporary, Lord Brougham: "His cleverness, his tact, his skill in drawing forth those he was studying, his admirable good-humor, his strict love of truth, his high and generous principle, his kindness towards his friends, his unvarying but generally rational piety, have scarcely been sufficiently praised by those who, nevertheless, have always been ready, as needs they must be, to acknowledge the debt of gratitude due for the book, of all, perhaps, that were ever written, the most difficult to lay down once it has been taken up."

Macaulay, it will be noticed, is no exception to the last statement; while assailing the character of the author, he by no means depreciates the value of the book. Shortly after his first essay on Johnson, he wrote, "I never was better pleased than when at fourteen I was master of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, which I had long been wishing to read." It was mainly by adopting Boswell as an exemplar that Macaulay's own biographer, his nephew Mr. Trevelyan, succeeded so

well, and the *Life and Letters of Macaulay* has taken its place among the two or three biographies that acknowledge no superior but Boswell's *Johnson*. The student will never regret the time spent upon Macaulay's *Life of Johnson* if he is thereby induced to read the fascinating *Life* of its author and the still more fascinating *Life* of its subject — two of the most entertaining books in the realm of literature.



TWO DESKS USED BY DR. JOHNSON.
Now in the Library of Pembroke College, Oxford.

NOTES.

2. 12. This failure undoubtedly accorded with the elder Johnson's political sentiments, if not with his paternal wishes; for, like a true Jacobite, he held that William III. and Anne were usurpers and therefore did not inherit that divine power which alone made the royal touch effectual. A little later, the Jacobite Pretender (son of James II.) took up his residence in Rome, and many years after Boswell ventured to suggest to Johnson that "his mother had not carried him far enough; she should have taken him to Rome." In fact, while the Georges stopped the practice of "touching," it was used on one occasion by the young Pretender (grandson of James II.) in 1745.

3. 13. In his fifty-fourth year, Johnson remarked: "In my early years I read very hard. It is a sad reflection, but a true one, that I knew almost as much at eighteen as I do now. My judgment, to be sure, was not so good; but I had all the facts." His later reading, he afterward explained, had been hindered by ill health, but his contemporaries testified that "Johnson knew more books than any man alive." The same relative knowledge was possessed by Macaulay, who likewise felt an early attraction for the restorers of learning. At fifteen he preferred Boccaccio to Chaucer, and his earliest writings include criticisms on Dante and Petrarch.

5. 11. There is strong evidence for believing that Johnson remained in continuous residence at Oxford for little more than a year, though his name did not disappear from the college books until 1731. Despite his small obligations to Oxford, Johnson always maintained a warm regard and partiality for his *alma mater*, and in later years made frequent visits to the University, as "he was nowhere so happy."

6. 8. Four years before Macaulay wrote this *Life*, he himself owned "to the feeling Dr. Johnson had, of thinking oneself bound sometimes to touch a particular rail or post, and to tread always in the middle of the paving stone." This did not prevent him from considerably exaggerating Johnson's peculiarities, or from describing single, unrepeated acts as the habits of a lifetime. Macaulay's characterizations are always brilliant, but seldom reliable.

8. 14. There is scarcely a single statement in this paragraph that is not open to objection. Macaulay describes Mrs. Porter unqualifiedly in the words of Garrick, as given by Boswell, who adds that he "considerably aggravated the picture," owing to his inherent love of mimicry, and that "she must have had a superiority of understanding and talents, as she certainly inspired Johnson with a more than ordinary passion." In "the kind widow's love and pity for him," says Carlyle "in Johnson's love and gratitude, there is actually no matter for ridicule." Despite Johnson's "very forbidding" appearance, Mrs. Porter recognized his sterling merit at once, and observed to her daughter, "This is the most sensible man that I ever saw in my life." They were married July 9, 1735, when Mrs. Porter was forty-six and Johnson nearly twenty-six. Macaulay's statement, that he acquired step-children as old as himself, is a mere fiction; the two whose birth-dates are known were both much younger than Johnson. Equally untrue is the assertion that Mrs. Porter "was as poor as himself," for there is positive evidence that she possessed a small fortune, probably £800, which enabled Johnson to undertake his next enterprise. Macaulay again errs in saying that he "had seldom or never been in the same room with a woman of real fashion"—a contradiction of Boswell's explicit statement that Johnson "passed much time in his early years . . . in the company of ladies . . . remarkable for good breeding."

9. 12. Johnson was accompanied by Garrick—both together, according to the former's statement later, possessing only fourpence. In the summer, Johnson returned to Lichfield, finished his tragedy, and then removed permanently to London with Mrs. Johnson.

9. 22. During the boyhood of Johnson, Steele was a member of Parliament, the poet Prior was Ambassador to France, and Addison was Secretary of State. (See *Essay on Addison.*) Further examples are given by Macaulay in his earlier *Essay on Johnson*, which contains a detailed account of the state of literature at this period. See also Swift's lively poem, *Libel on Delany and Carteret.*

9. 26. A list of such writers would include Scott, Byron, Dickens, Thackeray, and Macaulay. Scott, indeed, earned this sum (£40,000) in but little over two years; while Macaulay, in the year preceding the date of this sketch, received a check for £20,000 as part of the profits from his *History of England.*

12. 15. A few days after Johnson became a contributor to the *Gentleman's Magazine* the House of Commons resolved "that it is a high indignity to, and a notorious breach of the privilege of, this House to give any account of the debates, as well during the recess as the sitting of Parliament." Several offenders soon after were imprisoned and fined, and Cave himself was examined before the House of Lords a few years later. The press, however, gradually became too

powerful for the government, and thirty years after Johnson's reports, complete accounts of the parliamentary debates were published without disguise. Shortly afterward were established the earliest great London dailies.

13. 23. The reference to Laud is from the *Vanity of Human Wishes* (1749), l. 173. Hampden is called "the zealot of rebellion" in the *Life of Waller* (1778). Macaulay, it will be noticed, deduces Johnson's prejudices not from the *Debates*, but from his later and better known works.

14. 1. Many years after, however, Johnson wrote that "at this time [1740] a long course of opposition to Sir Robert Walpole [Int., p. xvi.] had filled the nation with clamors for liberty, of which no man felt the want, and with care for liberty, which was not in danger."

14. 14. Macaulay has wrongly interpreted Johnson's remark. Boswell inquired, "Pray, sir, can you trace the cause of your antipathy to the Scotch?" *Johnson.* "I cannot, sir." *Boswell.* "Old Mr. Sheridan says, it was because they sold Charles I." *Johnson.* "Then, sir, old Mr. Sheridan has found out a very good reason!" In Boswell's opinion, Johnson was prejudiced against the Scotch because of their unmerited prosperity in England, their selfish obtrusiveness, and their undue attachment to their own country. This prejudice, however, was "of the head, not of the heart," and disappeared almost completely in later years.

14. 24. Johnson said later "that as soon as he found that the speeches were thought genuine, he determined that he would write no more of them; for 'he would not be accessary to the propagation of falsehood.' And such was the tenderness of his conscience that a short time before his death he expressed his regret for his having been the author of fictions which had passed for realities." Two of these speeches were published in Lord Chesterfield's Works as "specimens of his lordship's eloquence," and another, put into the mouth of Pitt, was afterward praised in Johnson's presence as finer than anything in Demosthenes.

15. 13. Horace, says Minto, "was the gay, light-hearted satirist of the foibles of the literary and fashionable society of Rome; whereas Juvenal took a more stern and gloomy view of life, and lashed the vices of his age in a spirit of moral indignation, with bitter and unsparing scorn. Pope, himself in easy circumstances, and the friend of noblemen and statesmen, naturally had most sympathy with Horace's view of life; while Johnson, then earning a precarious livelihood as a bookseller's drudge, as naturally thought of Juvenal as a model. (*See* Index, "Juvenal," and Johnson's Ideals, § 1, p. xx.)

19. 14. One of Johnson's friends, doubting his ability to complete his Dictionary in three years, reminded him that "the French Academy,

which consists of forty members, took forty years to compile their Dictionary." Johnson replied: "Sir, thus it is. This is the proportion. Let me see; forty times forty is sixteen hundred. As three to sixteen hundred, so is the proportion of an Englishman to a Frenchman." Though he wrote to one friend that he "did not find dictionary making so very unpleasant as it may be thought," he told another that "it was easier to him to write poetry than to compose his Dictionary."

20. 1. Dryden's translation, though in general too free, is close enough in this passage to be of service. (The student of Latin, however, will do better to compare with the original text.)

> "Some ask for envy'd power; which public hate
> Pursues, and hurries headlong to their fate:
> Down go the tithes; and the statue crown'd,
> Is by base hands in the next river drown'd.
> The guiltless horses, and the chariot wheel,
> The same effects of vulgar fury feel. . . .
> "Adorn your doors with laurels; and a bull,
> Milk-white, and large, lead to the Capitol;
> Sejanus, with a rose, is dragg'd along;
> The sport and laughter of the giddy throng! . . .
> They follow fortune, and the common cry
> Is still against the rogue condemn'd to die. . . .
> 'Come let us haste, our loyal zeal to show,
> And spurn the wretched corpse of Cæsar's foe.'" . . .

The corresponding passage by Johnson (which the student should compare with Shakespeare's celebrated portrayal in *Henry VIII.*, Act III. Sc. ii.) is as follows: —

> "In full-blown dignity, see Wolsey stand,
> Law in his voice, and fortune in his hand:
> To him the church, the realm, their powers consign,
> Through him the rays of regal bounty shine,
> Turn'd by his nod the stream of honor flows,
> His smile alone security bestows:
> Still to new heights his restless wishes tower,
> Claim leads to claim, and power advances power. . . .
> At length his sovereign frowns — the train of state
> Mark the keen glance, and watch the sign to hate.
> Where'er he turns, he meets a stranger's eye,
> His suppliants scorn him, and his followers fly;
> Now drops at once the pride of awful state,
> The golden canopy, the glittering plate,

The regal palace, the luxurious board,
The liveried army, and the menial lord.
With age, with cares, with maladies oppress'd,
He seeks the refuge of monastic rest.
Grief aids disease, remember'd folly stings,
And his last sighs reproach the faith of kings."

20. 6. The description of Charles XII. (*q.v.* Index) is the most familiar passage in Johnson's poem : —

"On what foundation stands the warrior's pride,
How just his hopes, let Swedish Charles decide;
A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
No dangers fright him, and no labors tire; . . .
No joys to him pacific sceptres yield,
War sounds the trumpet, he rushes to the field;
Behold surrounding kings their power combine,
And one capitulate, and one resign;
Peace courts his hand, but spreads her charms in vain:
'Think nothing gain'd,' he cries, 'till nought remain,
On Moscow's walls till Gothic standards fly,
And all be mine beneath the polar sky.'
The march begins in military state,
And nations on his eye suspended wait; . . .
He comes, nor want nor cold his course delay; —
Hide, blushing Glory, hide Pultowa's day:
The vanquish'd hero leaves his broken bands,
And shows his miseries in distant lands; . . .
His fall was destined to a barren strand,
A petty fortress, and a dubious hand;
He left the name, at which the world grew pale,
To point a moral, or adorn a tale."

20. 7. Johnson thus addresses the ambitious scholar: —

"Should tempting Novelty thy cell refrain,
And Sloth effuse her opiate fumes in vain; . . .
Should no disease thy torpid veins invade,
Nor Melancholy's phantoms haunt thy shade,
Yet hope not life from grief or danger free,
Nor think the doom of man reversed for thee:
Deign on the passing world to turn thine eyes,
And pause awhile from learning to be wise;
There mark what ills the scholar's life assail —
Toil, envy, want, the patron, and the jail."

Johnson originally wrote *garret* instead of *patron*, which he substituted after his experience with Chesterfield. The entire passage is largely autobiographical, and at a later period drew tears from Johnson himself.

24. 1. These sketches in the *Spectator* are recommended by Macaulay in his *Essay on Addison* as select specimens of "the extent and variety of Addison's powers." For a brief description, see *Essay on Addison*, this series, pp. 119, 121.

24. 6. The *Ramblers* referred to are, respectively, Nos. 142, 138, 82, 119, 22, 161, and 186–187. These sketches are certainly inferior to the *Spectator* papers; but in the more serious numbers, which earned for Johnson the title of the "Great Moralist," he is considered by many to have equalled, if not surpassed, his predecessor. "My other works," remarked Johnson, "are wine and water; but my *Rambler* is pure wine." (*See* Johnson's Ideals, § 4, p. xxi.)

25. 25. This celebrated letter has been termed the Declaration of Independence, or Magna Charta, of authorship; and Carlyle calls it the "far-famed blast of doom, proclaiming into the ear of Lord Chesterfield, and, through him, of the listening world, that patronage should be no more!"

"To the Right Honorable the Earl of Chesterfield.

"February 7, 1755.

"My Lord,

"I have been lately informed, by the proprietor of the World, that two papers, in which my Dictionary is recommended to the public, were written by your Lordship. To be so distinguished, is an honor, which, being very little accustomed to favors from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

"When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address; and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*; — that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your Lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

"Seven years, my Lord, have now past, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of

favor. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

"The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

"Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labors, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

"Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favorer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation, my Lord,

"Your Lordship's most humble, most obedient servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

After reading Chesterfield's two papers in the *World*, Johnson said to Garrick, "I have sailed a long and painful voyage round the world of the English language; and does he now send out two cock-boats to tow me into harbor?" In the Dictionary, Johnson defined *patron* as "commonly a wretch who supports with insolence and is paid with flattery."

26. 2. The passage referred to is the last paragraph of the Preface: —

"In this work, when it shall be found that much is omitted, let it not be forgotten that much likewise is performed; and though no book was ever spared out of tenderness to the author, and the world is little solicitous to know whence proceeded the faults of that which it condemns; yet it may gratify curiosity to inform it that the English Dictionary was written with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academic bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow. It may repress the triumph of malignant criticism to observe, that if our language is not here fully displayed, I have only failed in an attempt which no human powers have hitherto completed. If the lexicons of ancient tongues, now immutably fixed, and comprised in a few volumes, be yet, after the toil of successive ages, inadequate and delusive; if the aggregated knowledge, and coöperating diligence of the Italian academicians, did not secure them from the censure of Beni; if the embodied critics of France, when fifty years had been spent upon their work, were obliged to change its economy, and

give their second edition another form, I may surely be contented without the praise of perfection, which, if I could obtain, in this gloom of solitude, what would it avail me? I have protracted my work till most of those whom I wished to please have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds: I therefore dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise."

26. 14. The Dictionary is further enlivened by a few pleasantries, some of which do not spare the author himself. He defined *lexicographer* as "a writer of dictionaries, a harmless drudge," and included him among the inhabitants of Grub Street (*q.v.* Index). Nor is the work free from the prejudices catalogued by Macaulay in ¶ 13. *Oats*, we are told, is "a grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people." *Whig* is nothing more than "the name of a faction." Other definitions marked by partisanship are quoted in ¶ 34.

26. 19. It is true, as Macaulay wrote earlier, that Johnson "felt a vicious partiality for terms borrowed from the Greek and Latin," but perhaps overmuch stress has been laid upon this point. In the Preface to the Dictionary nearly three-fourths of the words are of Teutonic derivation. It was entirely natural that in constructing definitions he should use the words of a classic tongue, although the result was sometimes ludicrous. For example, he defined a *network* as something "reticulated or decussated, with interstices between the intersections." As to the "one great fault" of the Dictionary, it should be remembered that the science of etymology in Johnson's day, if it existed at all, was in a very crude state, and Johnson wisely refused to indulge in mere guesswork.

26. 29. In his *Essay on Johnson*, Macaulay writes, "Johnson, Collins, Fielding, and Thomson were certainly four of the most distinguished persons that England produced during the eighteenth century. It is well known that they were all four arrested for debt."

27. 23. It is significant of the decline of the *Spectator* type of periodicals that the *Idler* appeared not independently, but in the columns of a weekly newspaper. Shortly after the *Rambler*, Johnson had also contributed essays to the *Adventurer* (*see* List of Periodicals, II, p. xxx.). The *Idlers* were written more hurriedly, and are therefore shorter and sprightlier. Instead of the Verecundulus and Dicaculus of the *Rambler*, the imaginary characters receive such names as Molly Quick and Jack Whirler. The portrait of the indolent Sober (No. 31) is autobiographical.

29. 29. The second sentence of the paragraph will show what poet is meant. The anachronisms referred to occur in *Troilus and Cressida*, II. ii. 166, and *Winter's Tale*, V. ii. 106. Johnson calls attention to these improprieties only to add that such objections "are the petty

cavils of petty minds; a poet overlooks the casual distinction of country and condition, as a painter, satisfied with the figure, neglects the drapery." (*See* Johnson's Ideals, § 3, p. xxi.)

30. 16. The Lord Privy Seal was then Earl Gower. Johnson narrated the incident to Boswell: "You know, sir, Lord Gower forsook the old Jacobite interest. When I came to the word *Renegado*, after telling that it meant 'one who deserts to the enemy, a revolter,' I added, *Sometimes we say a Gower*. Thus it went to the press; but the printer had more wit than I, and struck it out."

31. 5. As a matter of fact, Johnson's lofty independence was so feared that the offer was disclosed "by slow and studied approaches," and Johnson deliberated for many hours before accepting. He finally gave up his scruples, and remarked smilingly to Boswell, "Sir, I think that the pleasure of cursing the House of Hanover, and drinking King James's health, are amply overbalanced by £300 a year."

32. 6. These quotations are from Johnson's private journal of *Prayers and Meditations*, published after his death. Macaulay himself, by his own confession, "often felt this morbid incapacity to work." The year after the date of this *Life*, he wrote: "How the days steal away and nothing done! I think often of Johnson's lamentations repeated every Easter over his own idleness."

32. 17. It is surprising that even Macaulay should be guilty of such gross misrepresentation as this. Johnson was a mere investigator, who, by request, assisted in an examination of the phenomena by "many gentlemen eminent for their rank and character." It was unanimously decided by the investigators that the entire affair was an imposition, and a report to that effect, written by Johnson, was published in the newspapers. (*See* Index, "Cock Lane Ghost.")

32. 24. Churchill's poem was entitled *The Ghost*. The caricature of Johnson will be found in Book II. ll. 653–688, beginning: —

> "Pomposo, insolent and loud,
> Vain idol of a scribbling crowd,
> Whose very name inspires an awe,
> Whose ev'ry word is Sense and Law."

The charge of fraud is made in Book III. ll. 801 +: —

> "He for subscribers baits his hook,
> And takes their cash: but where's the book?
> No matter where; wise fear, we know,
> Forbids the robbing of a foe;
> But what, to serve our private ends,
> Forbids the cheating of our friends?"

Johnson was not himself disturbed by this attack (*see* ¶ 42), but his friends felt its sting, and persuaded him to hasten the completion of his work.

33. 1. More competent critics than Macaulay have praised Johnson's Preface for its impartial discussion of Shakespeare's merits and defects, its refutation of the dramatic unities, and its oft-quoted advice on the study of Shakespeare.

34. 2. As a matter of fact, Johnson himself asserted the necessity of such a preparation. In his prospectus, in the same paragraph quoted by Macaulay a little earlier, he expresses the hope "that, by comparing the works of Shakespeare with those of writers who lived at the same time, immediately preceded, or immediately followed him, he shall be able to ascertain his ambiguities," etc. (*See* Johnson's Ideals, § 6, p. xxii.)

37. 2. In his *Life of Goldsmith*, written shortly before the present essay, Macaulay speaks of "that celebrated fraternity which has sometimes been called the Literary Club, but which has always disclaimed that epithet, and still glories in the simple name of 'The Club.'" It celebrated its centennial in 1864, and in every generation its members have included many leading Englishmen. Macaulay was elected unanimously in 1839, and after his first meeting, wrote in his diary: "I was amused, in turning over the records of the club, to come upon poor Bozzy's signature, evidently affixed when he was too drunk to guide his pen."

41. 27. This description of Johnson's dependents is considerably overcharged. On the death of Mrs. Williams, Johnson wrote that she "had been to me for thirty years in the place of a sister; her knowledge was great and her conversation pleasing." Others have testified to her engaging manners and her lively and entertaining conversation. Levett's character, says a contemporary, "was rendered valuable by repeated proof of honesty, tenderness, and gratitude to his benefactor, as well as by an unwearied diligence in his profession." Johnson's affectionate regard for him is shown by his *Ode on the Death of Levett*, which has moved countless readers by its deep tenderness and pathos.

44. 26. "I wish, eminent Sir, to dispute with you, if you are willing."

49. 22. Johnson did not consider himself underpaid, and constantly maintained that he had met with his deserts. When the *Lives* were completed, he remarked: "I always said that the booksellers were a generous set of men: the fact is not that they have paid me too little, but that I have written too much." Furthermore, it should be noted that Johnson soon after received another £100 in addition to the extra hundred mentioned by Macaulay.

52. 2. Macaulay is severely unjust to Mrs. Thrale. His account of her "degrading passion" for Piozzi is pervaded by the narrow

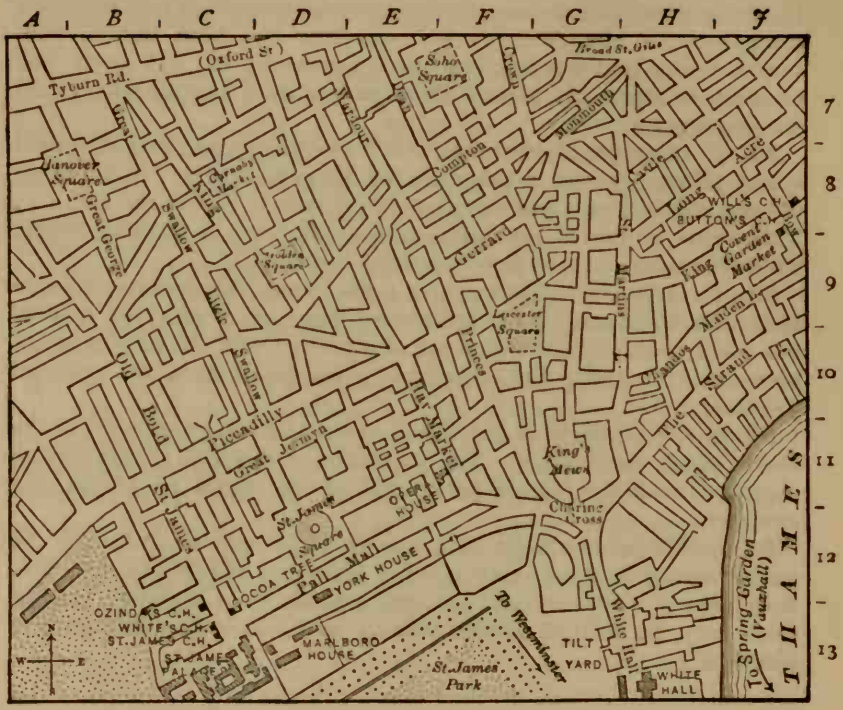
prejudice of eighteenth-century society, by whom "a match with an Italian Roman Catholic musician was naturally regarded with excessive disapproval." Mrs. Thrale's first marriage had been one of convenience only and was marked by disagreement, but she never had occasion to regret her second marriage, and lived happily with Piozzi for many years.

52. 7. In the paper referred to, which is very short, and should be read entire, Johnson writes: "There are few things not purely evil, of which we can say, without some emotion of uneasiness, *this is the last*. . . . This secret horror of the last is inseparable from a thinking being, whose life is limited, and to whom death is dreadful."

53. 17. With the change only of a few names, this sentence became applicable to Macaulay himself exactly three years after the date of this essay, or exactly three-quarters of a century after the date of which he writes. Macaulay lies buried but a few paces from the grave of Johnson.

54. 6. This thought is elaborated in the last two paragraphs of the earlier *Essay on Johnson*. The conclusion of this *Life* should also be compared with the closing paragraphs in the essays on Milton and Addison.

54. 9. Macaulay alludes to a remark of Johnson's: "Among the anfractuosities of the human mind, I know not if it may not be one, that there is a superstitious reluctance to sit for a picture." In his Dictionary, he defined *anfractuousness* as "fulness of windings and turnings."

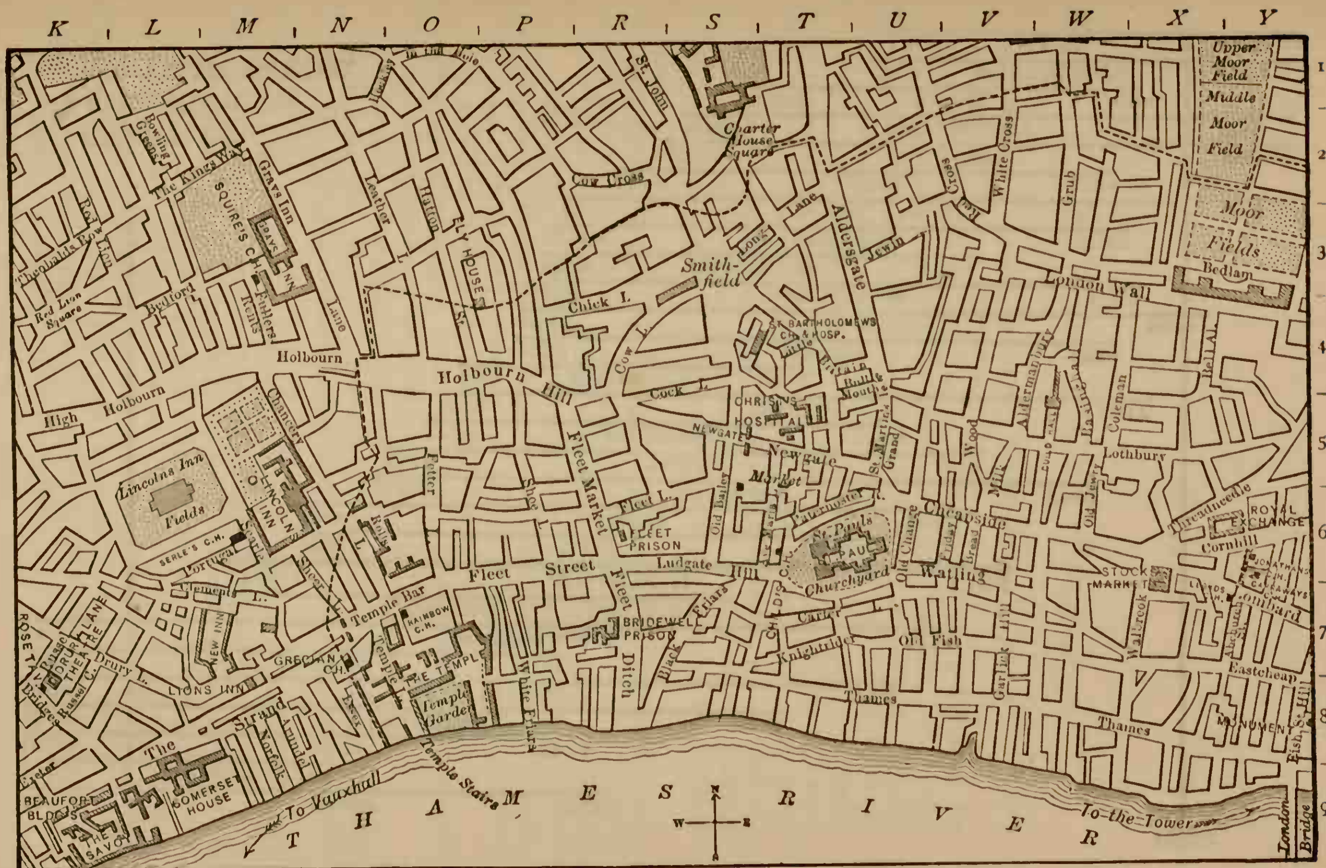


LONDON IN 1780. — COVENT GARDEN AND WESTWARD.

By employing a ruler to determine the boundaries of the lettered and numbered sections, the following places may be located : —

Button's Coffee House, *J*, 8.
Cock Lane, *R*. 4
Covent Garden, *J*, 9.
Drury Lane, *L*, 7.
Drury Lane Theatre, *K*, 7.
Fleet St., *P*, 6.
Grub St., *W*, 2.
Johnson's Homes :
  Exeter St., *K*, 8.
  Woodstock St., Hanover Sq., *B*, 8.
  Castle St., *H*, 8.
  Strand, *H*, *J*, 10.
  Holbourn, *N*, 4.
Fetter Lane, *O*, 5, 6.
Gray's Inn, *M*, 3.
Inner Temple Lane, *N*, 8
  Johnson's Ct., Fleet St., *P*, 6.
  Bolt Ct., Fleet St., *P*, 6.
Leicester House, *F*, 9.
Literary Club :
  Gerrard St., *F*, 9.
  St. James's St., *C*, 12.
Mitre Tavern, Fleet St., *P*, 6.
Newgate, *S*, 5.
Royal Exchange, *X*, *Y*, 6.
St. James's Sq., *D*, 12.

"Life of Johnson."



London in 1780 — From Covent Garden Eastward to London Bridge.

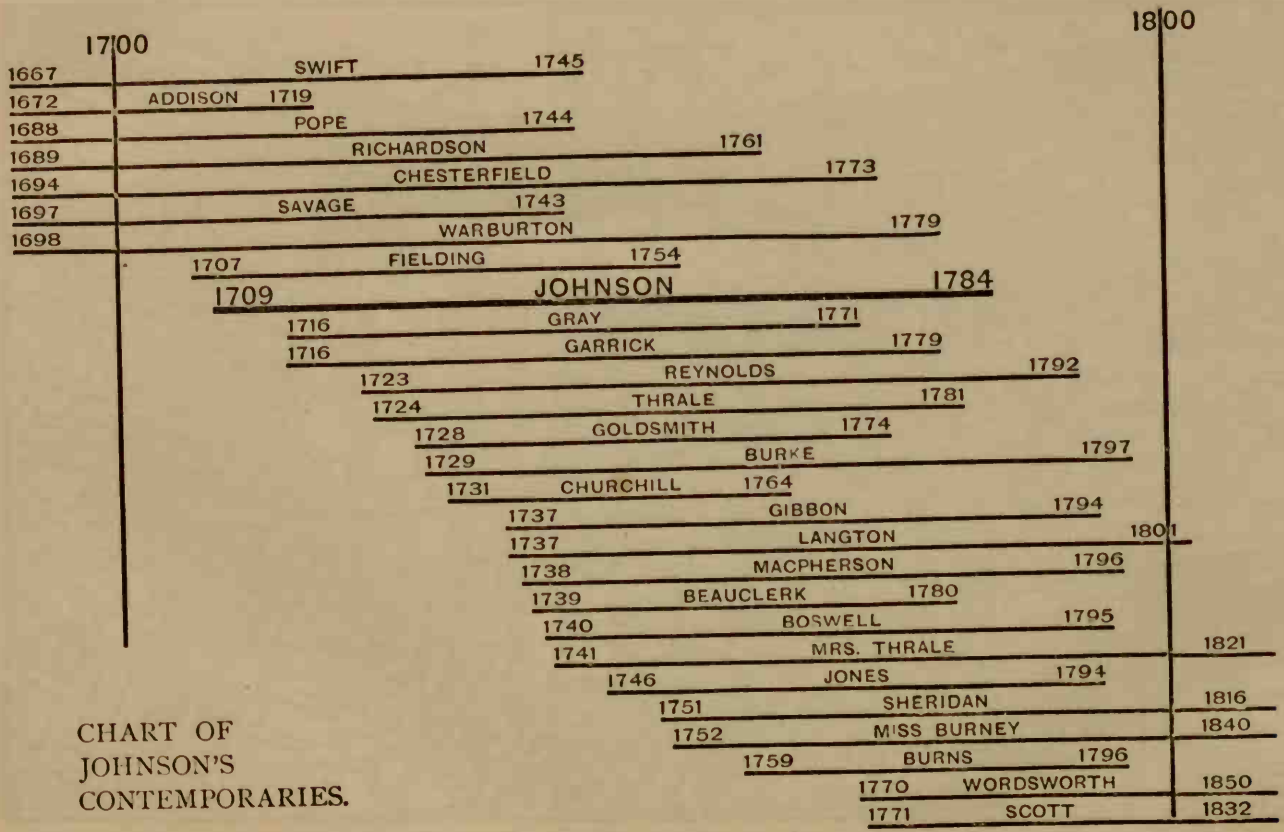


CHART OF JOHNSON'S CONTEMPORARIES.

EXPLANATORY INDEX.

Abyssinia: a country in eastern Africa, south of Egypt, and the pretended scene of Johnson's *Rasselas*.

Addison, Joseph (1672–1719): a leading figure in the Augustan Age of English literature. Addison's classical tragedy, *Cato* (which Johnson called the noblest production of his genius), inspired Johnson's *Irene*. The *Tatler* and the *Spectator* (begun by Steele, but greatly enriched by Addison) called forth a swarm of similar periodicals, including Johnson's *Rambler*. (*See* Macaulay's *Essay on Addison*, this series.) Johnson's oft-quoted advice at the end of his *Life of Addison* was expressed more tersely in counselling a young man: "Give days and nights, sir, to the study of Addison, if you mean to be a good writer, or, what is more worth, an honest man."

Æschylus (525–456 B.C.), **Euripides** (480–406 B.C.), **Sophocles** (495–405 B.C.): the three great tragic dramatists of ancient Greece. They were contemporaries and rivals, and a thorough understanding of one is consequently impossible without a knowledge of the others. The period in which they flourished, the Age of Pericles, holds the same position in the history of Greece that the Age of Elizabeth holds in the history of England.

Alamode beef-shops: where beef was served *à la mode*, *i.e.* stewed with vegetables, wine, spices, etc.

Almon and **Stockdale**: leading booksellers of Johnson's time.

Aristotle (384–322 B.C.): a profound philosopher of ancient Greece. His influence dominated the intellectual world for two thousand years.

Attic: practically equivalent to *Athenian*. Athens, the leading city of ancient Greece, was situated in the district of Attica.

Augustan: marked by the purity and refinement which characterized the works of the Augustan Age (31 B.C.–14 A.D.), the most illustrious period of Roman literature. Under the patronage of Augustus, the first Roman emperor, flourished such writers as Virgil, Horace, Ovid, and Livy. The term *Augustan Age* is also applied metaphorically to periods of the same relative refinement in other literatures, *e.g.* the reign of Queen Anne.

Bath: one hundred miles west of London; famous for its baths and as the most fashionable watering-place of Johnson's time.

Beauclerk, Topham (1739–1780): descended from Henry IV. of France and Charles II. of England, both of whom he resembled in some degree. Though strongly unlike Langton or Johnson in character, Beauclerk became a very close friend of both. Johnson declared that "Beauclerk's talents were those which he had felt himself more disposed to envy than those of any whom he had known." When Beauclerk was dying, Johnson said, with great emotion, "I would walk to the extent of the diameter of the earth to save Beauclerk."

Bentincks: a powerful Whig family of Dutch descent, which owed its position in England to the Revolution of 1688, and therefore ardently supported the Hanoverian kings of England.

Bentley, Richard (1662–1742): an eminent critic and "the greatest scholar that had appeared in Europe since the revival of letters" (Macaulay). Johnson "thought very highly" of Bentley, but observed, regarding the apothegm referred to, that "he was right not to answer; for, in his hazardous method of writing, he could not but be often enough wrong." (*See* Macaulay's *Life of Atterbury*.)

Birmingham: a manufacturing town of middle England. It was not until several decades after Johnson's residence there that its rapid growth occurred.

Blue ribbons: members of the Order of the Garter, the highest grade of English knighthood. They were so called from the blue ribbons worn below the knee as badges of the Order.

Blues and Greens of the Roman circus: The charioteers in the Roman circus were discriminated by various liveries,—at first white and red, to which were soon added blue and green. The contests gradually increased in intensity until the entire multitude, as well as princes and magistrates, espousing sides according to colors, became involved in bloody and tumultuous rivalries. After the decline of Rome, the factions continued their strife with much greater fury in Constantinople, where the dissensions were attended with murder and pillage, and culminated in the terrible "Nika" riot (532) in which many thousands were slain.

Boswell, James (1740–1795): "the prince of biographers." He was born in Edinburgh, "a gentleman," as he describes himself, "of ancient blood, the pride of which was his predominant passion." He studied law in the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, was called to the Scottish bar in 1766, and to the English twenty years later. On his second visit to London (1763) he obtained his celebrated introduction to Johnson. The great dictator at once admitted him to the most cordial friendship, and accompanied his

admirer to the coast when Boswell departed for the continent to continue his studies. After travelling extensively in Europe, where he visited Voltaire and Rousseau, he returned to London in 1766. His *Account of Corsica* (1768) brought him into public notice, and in 1773 he was elected a member of "The Club." The same year he accompanied Johnson on their famous tour to the Hebrides, the narrative of which by Boswell (1785) is more interesting than Johnson's own account. Johnson pronounced Boswell "the best travelling companion in the world," and praised his "good humor and perpetual cheerfulness." He approved of him as his biographer, and gave him many details of his early life, though all together Boswell was in Johnson's company little over two years. Finally, in 1791, Boswell published his great work, the *Life of Samuel Johnson*, in two volumes quarto. It met with widespread and immediate success, and Boswell was at work on the third edition when he died, four years later. (*See* p. 55.)

Brescia: in Lombardy, northern Italy.

Brighton: south of London; now the leading seashore resort in England.

Bruce, James (1730–1794): a pioneer of African exploration, the Stanley of his day. He explored Abyssinia in 1768–1770, and twenty years later published his *Travels* in five volumes—"the epic of African travel."

Buck: a gay, finical fellow; a coxcomb. (*See* Maccaroni.)

Burke, Edmund (1729–1797): the greatest master of English prose in the eighteenth century. His utterances on the French Revolution, and on England's policy toward the American and Indian colonies, reveal the profoundest orator and statesman of his time. He was a stanch friend of Johnson, despite their political differences, and each appreciated the other's talents. "The first man everywhere," Johnson called him, and maintained repeatedly that he alone was "an extraordinary man." On the other hand, Burke valued Johnson's friendship as "the greatest consolation and happiness of his life," and was content, in conversation, "to have rung the bell to him."

Burney, Frances (1752–1840): an English novelist of very great temporary popularity. Her first novel, *Evelina* (1778), procured her the warm praise and endearing regard of her father's friend, Johnson. Macaulay terms *Evelina* "the first tale written by a woman, and purporting to be a picture of life and manners, that lived or deserved to live." Miss Burney afterward married General D'Arblay, and her entertaining *Diary and Letters*, published after her death, called forth Macaulay's *Essay on Madame D'Arblay*.

Button: proprietor of a famous coffee-house near Covent Garden (*see* map, p. 70) during the Queen Anne period. "Here it was," says Johnson, "that the wits of that time used to assemble." It was the favorite resort of Addison, Pope, and Swift.

Capulets and Montagues: two noble families of Verona, Italy, in the fourteenth century. The bitter hostility between them, which forms an important element in the plot of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, had no other basis than irrational pride.

Cave, Edward (1691–1754): a printer and publisher widely known as the founder and first editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. His ownership of what Johnson calls "one of the most successful and lucrative pamphlets which literary history has upon record," procured for him an ample fortune. He also published Johnson's *Life of Savage* and the *Rambler*. Johnson's first contribution to the *Magazine* was a Latin ode to Cave, and one of his latest was a biographical sketch of his employer after Cave's death.

Cavendishes: a noble English family, "old friends" of the Hanoverians.

Cenis, Mont: the site of an Alpine road from Savoy into Italy, built by Napoleon I. about 1802+.

Charles XII. (1682–1718), King of Sweden: one of the most brilliant generals of modern times. After a meteoric succession of victories, he marched toward Moscow to dethrone Peter the Great, but was completely defeated at Pultowa (in the year of Johnson's birth). His attempts to regain power were ineffectual, and during the siege of Frederikshald he was killed by a random bullet fired by some "dubious hand."

Chesterfield, Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of (1694–1773): a brilliant statesman and letter writer, "the most distinguished orator in the Upper House and the undisputed sovereign of wit and fashion" (Macaulay). As Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1745–1746, when England and Scotland were torn by civil war, he kept the country quiet by his discreet and tolerant policy, besides encouraging education and industries. He served as principal secretary of state from 1746 to 1748. His fame rests chiefly, however, upon the *Letters to his Son* (1774), still much admired for their refinement, good sense, and graceful style. Johnson's advice — "Take out the immorality, and it should be put into the hands of every young gentleman" — has been followed in many expurgated editions, but the immorality is much exaggerated.

Churchill, Charles (1731–1764): a powerful English satirist of dissolute character, whose rancorous and incisive verses are now little remembered.

Cibber, Colley (1671–1757): a popular dramatist and comic actor;

poet laureate from 1730 to 1757. It was as actor and manager of Drury Lane Theatre that he made the changes alluded to in the text — his version of *Richard III.* keeping the stage for a century. Pope unjustly made him the central figure of the revised *Dunciad*, and Johnson usually spoke of him with contempt. Johnson admitted, however, that some of his comedies "had considerable merit."

Cicero, Marcus Tullius (106–43 B.C.): the greatest of Roman orators, and second only to Demosthenes. His enemies gained control of the government, and he was murdered after proscription.

Clarendon, Edward Hyde, Earl of (1608–1674): a famous statesman and historian. Like his friend Falkland, his sympathies lay at first with the Puritans, but he soon became a zealous Royalist, and served as one of Charles I.'s chief advisers. He was subsequently prime minister under Charles II.

Clerkenwell: a district of London, just north of the City. It was here, at St. John's Gate, that Cave printed the *Gentleman's Magazine*. (*See* ¶ 13.)

Cock Lane Ghost: a celebrated mystery which caused great excitement in London in 1762. The daughter of one Parsons, owner of a house in Cock Lane, Smithfield, claimed to have heard ghostly scratchings and rappings in her bedroom. Later a "luminous ghost" was said to have been seen by others, and communication was opened with the alleged ghost by a system of rappings. Through this agency the visitant claimed to be the spirit of a woman murdered by a Mr. Kent (against whom Parsons had a grudge). Parsons was later convicted of conspiracy against Kent, and was pilloried. The episode attracted the attention of such notable persons as Horace Walpole and the Duke of York, as well as of Dr. Johnson. In regard to the investigation participated in by Johnson, *see* p. 67.

Congreve, William (1670–1729): the wittiest of modern dramatists. His plays were all produced during 1693–1700, but he remained prominent in literary circles until his death. His single tragedy, *The Mourning Bride*, contains a passage which Johnson considered the finest poetical description he had ever read.

Copyright: the copyright provisions of Johnson's time were fixed by the Act of 1710, which granted an author the exclusive right to his property for fourteen years, renewable at the end of that period for a further term of fourteen years. Johnson favored a much longer term, although he opposed a perpetual copyright. Macaulay was of the same opinion, and it is to him that the English are indebted for the present copyright period of forty-two years.

Covent Garden: between Westminster and the Old City of London. It was originally the garden of the convent at Westminster, and has

long been noted for its fruit and flower market and its theatre. The square was the scene of foot-ball matches in Johnson's time, and near by Boswell first met his future preceptor. (*See* map, p. 70.)

Cowley, Abraham (1618–1667): the most popular poet of his age — the age of Milton. The latter, indeed, ranked Cowley next to Shakespeare and Spenser. (Macaulay, before the *Essay on Milton*, wrote a *Conversation between Cowley and Milton*.) Dryden called him "the darling of his youth," but by Johnson's time Cowley was out of fashion.

Delphi: a town of ancient Greece, renowned for its temple and oracle of Apollo.

Demosthenes (384 ?–322 B.C.): the greatest orator of Greece and of the world. As a result of his attempts to free his country from foreign rule, he was condemned to death, but committed suicide by poison.

Denham, Sir John (1615–1668): "one of the fathers of English poetry," says Johnson, referring to his "improvement" of the heroic couplet perfected by Dryden and Pope, and loved by Johnson.

Drury Lane: a celebrated London street, just outside the Old City. For nearly two centuries and a half it has been the site of a famous theatre, still noted for its spectacular plays. Johnson wrote a popular *Prologue* for Garrick's opening in 1747, which marked a notable Shakespearian revival. (*See* map, p. 70.)

Dryden, John (1631–1700): a leading English poet, and, like Johnson a century later, the "monarch of taste and the umpire of letters" of his age. He gave shape to the new literary movement toward scrupulous perfection of technique that culminated in the work of Pope and Johnson. Besides his political satires, the most powerful in the language, he wrote numerous dramas and odes, religious poems, paraphrases, and translations (Virgil, Juvenal), and critical essays and prefaces. Johnson declared that "he found English poetry brick, and he left it marble." (*See* Macaulay's *Essay on Dryden*.)

Ephesian matron: a fabled widow of ancient Ephesus (in Asia Minor), who followed the corpse of her husband into the tomb, "resolved to weep to death." She succumbed, however, to the attentions of a soldier stationed in the vicinity, and married him the same day. The story is best known as narrated in a Latin novel by Petronius (about 60 A.D.); but it appears in many Oriental languages, and has been repeated in almost every conceivable form.

Falkland, Lucius Cary, Viscount (1610–1643): a noble and accomplished statesman of the Royalist party. He acted at first with the

popular side, but later adhered faithfully to Charles I. and died in his cause. He was distinguished for his great love of peace and liberty.

Fielding, Henry (1707–1754): the greatest English novelist of the eighteenth century, "the prose Homer of human nature." His first literary efforts were directed toward the stage, but his numerous plays, including *Pasquin* (1736), a popular burlesque on the drama, are now practically forgotten. The success of Richardson introduced him to his true field, and in 1749 appeared his masterpiece, *Tom Jones*, soon followed by *Amelia* (1751). Johnson called Fielding a "barren rascal" and placed Richardson far above him, but he confessed that he had read *Amelia* at a single sitting.

Fleet Street: in the heart of London, near the Temple, and laden with literary associations. It was Johnson's "favorite street," and during most of his lifetime he clung to its courts and lanes, amid the "river fog and coal smoke." His garret in Gough Square is still a literary Mecca. (*See* map, p. 70.)

Garrick, David (1716–1779): the foremost actor of his age. With his friend and teacher, Johnson, he came to London in 1737, intending to study law, but his dramatic genius did not keep him long from his true element. After several provincial triumphs his London début in 1741 took the town by storm. He became manager of Drury Lane in 1747, and opened his reign with a celebrated *Prologue* by Johnson. Thenceforth he retained his leadership of the English stage, both in tragedy and comedy, for thirty years, purifying and elevating his profession, and effecting a great Shakespearian revival. After Garrick's death, Johnson eulogized his friend in the *Lives of the Poets*, in words afterward inscribed on the Garrick memorial in Lichfield: "I am disappointed by that stroke of death which has eclipsed the gaiety of nations, and impoverished the public stock of harmless pleasure."

Gay, John (1685–1732): a popular poet and dramatist of the Queen Anne period. He is best known by his *Fables* and songs (*Black-eyed Susan*), but his jovial talents were employed mainly in burlesque. *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), suggested by Swift ("what an odd, pretty sort of thing a Newgate pastoral might make"), was a travesty on Italian opera which met with extraordinary success.

Gibbon, Edward (1737–1794): perhaps the greatest historian England has yet produced. His *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is marked by a magnificence of style due indirectly to the influence of Johnson. The conversational powers of the two friends are thus compared by a contemporary: "Johnson's

style was grand, and Gibbon's elegant; the stateliness of the former was sometimes pedantic, and the latter was occasionally finical. Johnson marched to kettle-drums and trumpets, Gibbon moved to flutes and hautboys."

Goldsmith, Oliver (1728–1774): "the most beloved of English writers." In "light literature" he produced such inimitable comedies as *She Stoops to Conquer* (dedicated to Johnson); in "poetry," such charming idyls as *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village*, to both of which Johnson contributed several lines, including these in the former: —

> "How small of all that human hearts endure,
> That part which laws or kings can cause or cure,"

a thought already expressed by Johnson, notably in *Rasselas*. Goldsmith's famous novel, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, was sold through the agency of Johnson. Goldsmith was well estimated in Johnson's assertion that "no man was more foolish when he had not a pen in his hand, or more wise when he had." After the poet's death, Johnson wrote the Latin epitaph in Westminster Abbey, stating that Goldsmith "touched nothing that he did not adorn"; and in a letter he declared: "Let not his frailties be remembered; he was a very great man." (*See* Macaulay's sketch in *Encyclopædia Britannica*.)

Goodman's Fields: close to the Tower of London, and the site of the theatre which witnessed Garrick's début.

Grammar schools: Before the decline of classical studies, secondary schools were commonly known as *grammar schools*, from their almost exclusive attention to Greek and Latin grammar. In England, this designation is still applied to college preparatory schools of practically the same grade as the "public schools" (*q.v.*). The term *usher*, as applied to an assistant teacher, or submaster, is now rarely used.

Gray, Thomas (1716–1771): author of some of the noblest reflective poetry in the English language. He had a lofty poetic imagination, profound classical scholarship, and a sensitive taste. These and other qualities did not appeal to a man of Johnson's character. If the great critic was led to call Gray a "mechanical poet" and a "dull fellow," it was due not to personal prejudice, but to differences in principle and in taste, and to a lack of knowledge of Gray's true nature.

Grub Street: (now called Milton Street), just within the northern limits of Old London. It was for many years the habitat of impecunious men of letters, who eked out their income by doing piece-work for publishers, such as compiling reference books,

making indexes, and writing pamphlets; "whence any mean production," says Johnson, "is called *grubstreet*." These hack writers were the butt of Pope's ridicule in the *Dunciad* (epic on dunces). (*See* map, p. 70.)

Gunnings: two sisters of humble birth, but endowed with remarkable beauty. Both were married a few days before Mrs. Johnson's death, — Maria becoming Countess of Coventry, and Elizabeth the Duchess of Hamilton. The latter, afterward the Duchess of Argyle, was once the hostess of Johnson during his tour in Scotland.

Hamlet: the title and principal character of a great tragedy by Shakespeare. The passage referred to in ¶ 50 will be found in Act III. Sc. iv.

Hardwicke, Philip Yorke, Earl of (1690–1764): an eminent English jurist. He was Lord Chancellor from 1737 to 1756.

Harleian Library: the celebrated collection of Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford (1661–1724), one of Queen Anne's prime ministers. The manuscripts were sold to the government, and are now in the British Museum; but the books and pamphlets, nearly half a million in number, were bought (1742) by Osborne, the bookseller, for less than the cost of the binding. He employed Johnson to write the Introduction and the Latin entries in his five-volume Catalogue, and later the Preface to his *Harleian Miscellany*, a reprint of rare pamphlets in the collection.

Hartley, David (1705–1757): an English physician and philosopher. He made original contributions to psychology, and exerted a considerable influence on his successors.

Hebrides: a large group of islands west of Scotland. Perhaps the most celebrated is Iona, which in the Middle Ages was the chief seat of learning in the North.

Hector: son of the king of prehistoric Troy (in Asia Minor), and leader of the Trojans in the defence of their city against the Greeks. The date of the siege is given approximately as 1193–1184 B.C. Hector appears in Homer's *Iliad* and in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*.

Hervey, Henry (b. 1700): son of the Earl of Bristol and brother of John, Lord Hervey, the "Sporus" of Pope's *Epistle to Arbuthnot*. (*See* Johnson's *Life of Pope*.)

Hoole: There were two Hooles, — the "metaphysical tailor" mentioned in the text, and his nephew and pupil, the poet John Hoole (quoted in the *Essay on Addison*). Both were friends of Johnson.

Horace (65–8 B.C.): the leading lyric poet of the Augustan Age of Latin literature. His *Odes*, *Epodes*, *Satires*, and *Epistles*, unsurpassed in grace and rhythm, have always been the model and the

despair of modern poets. Johnson translated several of the *Odes*, but acknowledged that they "never can be perfectly translated."

Jenyns, Soame (1704–1787): an acute but eccentric theological metaphysician. His *Inquiry*, though written in an elegant style, was sportive and absurd, and merited Johnson's arraignment. After Johnson's death, Jenyns printed an abusive epitaph on his critic, but was answered in kind (probably by Boswell).

Jones, Sir William (1746–1794): a renowned jurist and Orientalist. His vast erudition, his knowledge of most of the European and Asiatic languages, and his numerous contributions to Oriental literature have placed him in the first rank of linguists. He wrote several familiar poems, especially the verses on *What Constitutes a State*.

Junius, Francis (1589–1677), and **Stephen Skinner** (1623–1667): philologists of the seventeenth century, eminent as pioneers in the comparative study of the Teutonic languages. Their etymological dictionaries were largely used by Johnson, who wrote in his Preface: "Junius appears to have excelled in extent of learning, and Skinner in rectitude of understanding."

Juvenal (40?–120? A.D.): the last and most powerful of the Roman satirists. His extant works consist of sixteen satires, which depict the manners and morals of the early Roman Empire with striking vividness and indignation. Juvenal, writes Macaulay elsewhere, "succeeded in communicating the fervor of [his] feelings to materials the most incombustible, and kindled the whole mass into a blaze at once dazzling and destructive."

Juvenal early attracted the attention of modern poets, and several translations appeared before the rather free rendering by Dryden and others (1693), five of the satires, including the third and the tenth, being translated by Dryden. A closer poetical version is that by Gifford (1802). Johnson was preceded in his imitation of the third satire by the English satirist Oldham and by the French poet Boileau; but Johnson has the best claim to the title of "the modern Juvenal."

Langton, Bennet (1737–1801): successor of Johnson in the chair of Ancient Literature, Royal Academy. He made Johnson's acquaintance about 1755, and their friendship was strong and affectionate. Johnson testified warmly that "the earth does not bear a worthier man than Bennet Langton." "I know not," he once said, "who will go to Heaven if Langton does not."

Languish, Miss Lydia: the sentimental heroine of *The Rivals*, the famous comedy by Sheridan (*q.v.*). Her reading consists almost entirely of romantic novels, the characters of which serve as models for her behavior.

Leicester House: in Leicester Square, near Covent Garden. In Johnson's time it was the residence of Prince Frederic, and from its repeated use after royal quarrels became known as the "pouting place of princes." (*See* map, p. 70.)

Lennox, Mrs. Charlotte (1720–1804): author of the celebrated novel, *The Female Quixote* (1752), to which Macaulay concedes "great merit, when considered as a wild, satirical harlequinade." Johnson praised Mrs. Lennox highly, and crowned her with laurel at a famous supper given in her honor after the appearance of her first novel.

Lichfield: in middle England, about one hundred miles to the north of London. It is noted for its exquisite cathedral. Its grammar school was attended by Addison (*q.v.*) and Garrick (*q.v.*), as well as Johnson. In his Dictionary the latter greeted the town of his birth with the Virgilian apostrophe, "*Salve, magna parens!*"

Lilliput: one of the imaginary islands visited by Lemuel Gulliver, the hero of the celebrated *Gulliver's Travels* of Swift (*q.v.*). The book is mainly a satire upon the political and social customs of the time of George I. and employs the names mentioned by Macaulay.

Lord Privy Seal: the British officer of state in charge of the "Privy Seal," which must be affixed to nearly all state documents. Papers of great importance must also pass under the "Great Seal," kept by the Lord Chancellor. Both keepers are members of the cabinet.

Maccaroni: a fop, or dandy. The popularity of the dish in Italy led a set of coxcombs who had travelled there to institute the Macaroni Club; and its members, with their ridiculous dress, soon spread the contagion. The word is so used in *Yankee Doodle*. Macaulay errs in remarking that macaroni and buck (*q.v.*) are obsolete; not only are the *names* in common use, but these *special senses* are still recognized. Thackeray, his contemporary, uses *buck* frequently in this sense.

Macpherson, James (1738–1796): a Scottish schoolmaster who obtained considerable notoriety by the publication (1762) of his *Fingal, an Ancient Epic Poem*, in six books of modulated prose — professedly a translation from Ossian, a Gaelic bard of the third century. The work became extremely popular, and was instrumental in furthering the revival of romanticism. Little respect, however, is now felt for Macpherson's poetry, and the general opinion agrees with Johnson's shrewd judgment that the work was really modern and had no lasting merit. Macpherson was buried, surprising as it may seem, in Westminster Abbey, only a few feet from his "deadly enemy," Johnson.

Macrobius: an obscure Latin writer and grammarian of the fifth century.

Malone, Edmond (1741–1812): a noted author and critic, especially distinguished as a Shakespearian scholar. His editions of Shakespeare marked a great advance on those of his predecessors. He was an intimate friend of Johnson, and especially of Boswell, whose *Life of Johnson* he edited in the later revisions.

Mansfield, William Murray, Earl of (1705–1793): a preëminent English jurist and orator. He was Lord Chief Justice from 1756 to 1788. He surpassed Pitt, says Macaulay elsewhere, "in correctness of taste, in power of reasoning, in depth and variety of knowledge."

Meister, Wilhelm: the hero of *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, a famous novel by Goethe. His comments on Hamlet's character — a piece of criticism greatly admired by Macaulay — are quoted in many editions of the play.

Milan: the third in size of Italian cities, and famous for its elaborate cathedral.

Mitre Tavern: in a court off Fleet Street (*q.v.*). It was Johnson's favorite resort, and the scene of his first supper with Boswell.

Montagu, Lady Mary Wortley (1689–1762): a wit, woman of letters, and society leader of the eighteenth century; notable as the author of many brilliant letters, and as the introducer of the Turkish practice of inoculation for the smallpox. She wrote in one of her letters that Johnson's *Rambler* followed the *Spectator* as "a pack-horse would follow a hunter."

Newcastle, Thomas Pelham, Duke of (1693–1768): a Whig secretary of state at the time of Johnson's *Debates*. He afterward became prime minister.

Newgate: a famous London prison, not far from St. Paul's. It was not demolished until very recently. (*See* map, p. 70.)

Newton, Sir Isaac (1642–1727): a most profound and original scientific investigator. He discovered the law of gravitation about 1665. Four years later he was made Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge, his *alma mater* (cf. p. vii.); but the University did not fully accept his discovery until the following century.

Ordinaries: eating houses where meals are served to all comers and at fixed prices; *tables d'hôte*.

Orrery, John Boyle, Earl of (1707–1762): a "feeble-minded" author and translator, though intimately acquainted with Swift, Pope, and Johnson. He wrote a series of letters on the *Life of Swift*, who had received him very cordially while in Ireland.

Oxonian: of Oxford; adjective from *Oxonia*, the Latin for Oxford.

Pension: the English pension list is not restricted to soldiers and public officers, but includes men of letters and others of distinction. In Johnson's time, pensions were awarded more for political services than for conspicuous merit. (*See* ¶ 34.)

Petrarch (1304–1374): a foremost Italian poet and scholar, and the "father of the revival of learning." His numerous Latin compositions are not so famous as his exquisite Italian lyrics. "In an age rude and uncultivated," says Johnson, "he refined the manners of the lettered world, and filled Europe with love and poetry."

Politian, Angelus (1454–1494): a distinguished Italian classical scholar and poet, "eminent," says Johnson, "among the restorers of polite literature."

Polonius: a character in *Hamlet;* chamberlain to the king and father of Ophelia. "Polonius," says Johnson, "is a man bred in courts, exercised in business, stored with observations, confident of his knowledge, proud of his eloquence, and declining to dotage."

Pope, Alexander (1688–1744): the ruler of the English literary realm between the dictatorship of Dryden and that of Johnson. The poetry of all three belongs to the classical, or "artificial" school; the principles of Dryden and Pope were followed and maintained by Johnson despite the adverse influences of the romantic revival. Pope's first publication appeared in the year of Johnson's birth. Three years later, the *Spectator* printed his *Messiah*, a religious pastoral emulating Virgil's fourth Eclogue. The *Essay on Criticism* and the *Rape of the Lock* placed him at the head of living poets, but it was his translation of *Homer* (1713–1725) — "the noblest version of poetry which the world has ever seen," says Johnson — that made him independent for the rest of his days. His name is thus coupled with Johnson's as an important factor in freeing the literary profession from its long servitude to patronage.

Pope's *Imitations of Horace* (1733–1737) include very liberal paraphrases of two *Satires* and four *Epistles*. They contain many personalities, and barely justify his designation as "the English Horace." It is interesting to note that the last of his poems (excepting new editions), the satire entitled "1738," appeared on the same morning as the first of Johnson's poems, the satire entitled *London*.

Porter's knot: a pad placed on the head for easing burdens.

Prior, Matthew (1664–1721): a minor poet and diplomatist of the age of Queen Anne. His graceful society verse is among the best of its kind. He "wanted not wisdom as a statesman," says Johnson, "or elegance as a poet."

Psalmanazar, George (1679?–1763): the assumed name of a celebrated impostor, who came to London in 1703. He was undoubtedly born in France, but pretended to be a native of Formosa and a convert to Christianity. He published a fictitious *Description of Formosa* (1704) which was widely accepted as authentic. In 1728, however, he renounced his false ways, and applied himself diligently to theological studies, later confessing his deception in his

autobiography (1764). Johnson was strongly impressed by his piety, and reverenced him as little less than a saint.

Public schools: The so-called "public schools" of England — Eton, Rugby, Westminster, and a few others — prepare students for the universities, like the American secondary schools, but they are not what our use of "public" implies. They are maintained by endowments and the fees of pupils, many of whom belong to the nobility. Even in Macaulay's day these schools devoted themselves almost exclusively to Greek and Latin, which still absorb most of their energies. The classes are known as *forms*, the number varying in the different schools; at Eton, the sixth form is the highest class.

Pulteney, William, Earl of Bath (1682–1764): a brilliant statesman and parliamentary orator. He put himself at the head of a group of rebellious Whigs against Walpole, and became, says Macaulay, "the greatest leader of opposition that the House of Commons had ever seen."

Queensberrys and Lepels: notable families of the English aristocracy. Mary Lepel, Lady Hervey, and Catherine Hyde, Duchess of Queensberry, were prominent women of fashion of Johnson's time, and mingled in the leading literary circles of the period.

Restorers of learning: the promoters of the great revival of classic letters in Europe during the fifteenth century (the Renaissance, the period of the discovery of America). In Italy, where the movement began and was most powerful, the "restorers" of Greek and Latin literature were principally Petrarch and Boccaccio. The revival soon spread to the rest of Europe through the efforts of Sir Thomas More (author of *Utopia*), Erasmus, and others.

Reynolds, Sir Joshua (1723–1792): a celebrated English portrait painter. The "finest gentleman of his age," generous and amiable, he gathered about his table some of the most eminent men of the time. With Johnson, whom he greatly admired, he maintained a warm intimacy for over thirty years, ended only by death. In Gibbon's words, Johnson was "Reynolds' oracle." He painted Johnson's portrait many times; the best of these pictures, now in the National Gallery, London, was executed for Mr. Thrale's Streatham villa in 1772, and is reproduced as the frontispiece to the present volume. He also painted the portraits of Boswell and other members of the famous Literary Club, of which he was the founder. Boswell dedicated his *Life of Johnson* to him. The great artist was also an able critic, and besides his invaluable *Discourses on Painting* to the Royal Academy (*q.v.*), he wrote for Johnson three numbers of the *Idler*. His sister also dabbled in painting, and made a portrait of Johnson.

Richardson, Samuel (1689–1761): the "creator of the English novel."

His masterpieces, *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1748), gained him prosperity and an international reputation. He wrote one paper for the *Rambler* (No. 97) which had the largest sale. Johnson admired him fervently, and pronounced him "the greatest genius that had shed its lustre on this path of literature." Macaulay, likewise, declared of Richardson's novels that "no writings, those of Shakespeare excepted, show a more profound knowledge of the human heart."

Robertson, William (1721–1793): a noted Scotch historian of the eighteenth century. His works were much admired for their elegant style, largely formed upon that of Johnson. The latter censured his imitator's "verbiage," but admitted that he "loved" his Scottish friend.

Romano, Julio [Giulio] (1492–1546): a talented Italian painter and architect. He was an intimate pupil and the principal heir of Raphael.

Roundheads: a derisive epithet applied to those Puritans (opponents of the throne) who wore their hair cropped close as a protest against the fashionable manner of dressing the hair adopted by the Royalists.

Royal Academy, London: founded under royal patronage in 1768 for the advancement of the fine arts. Reynolds (*q.v.*) was chosen as its first president, an office afterward held by an American, Benjamin West. In 1769 Johnson was appointed Professor in Ancient Literature. It was merely an honorary title, however, without salary.

Royal touch: From the time of Edward the Confessor, eleventh century (see *Macbeth*, IV. iii.), people "were weak enough to believe" that the sovereign's touch would cure scrofula, which thereby became known as the "king's evil." Charles II. is said to have "touched" nearly one hundred thousand persons. The gold touch-piece given to Johnson is now in the British Museum, and is pictured in Chambers's *Book of Days*, I., 85. Though the practice was discontinued by the Hanoverians, it survived in France until 1776.

St. James's Square: known as the residence of the London aristocracy since it was laid out in the reign of Charles II. (*See* map, p. 70.)

Savage, Richard (1697–1743): a mediocre English poet, rescued from obscurity by Johnson's famous *Life*. He professed to be the illegitimate son of Lord Rivers, and Johnson accepted his pretensions without doubt, but there is good reason for believing that he was an impostor. He wrote many dramas and poems, particularly the *Wanderer* (1729), a prototype of Goldsmith's

Traveller. As an intimate friend of the Grub Street hacks he supplied Pope with private intelligence for the *Dunciad*, and was rewarded by financial aid. He was also acquainted with Steele, who, like Savage later, "withdrew to starve and die in Wales." Savage is best known, however, as the close friend of Johnson, whom he resembled in many points. The "Thales" of Johnson's *London* (*see* List of Works) is generally believed to represent Savage.

Sejanus: the notorious confidant and chief minister of Tiberius, the second Roman emperor. He was left in sole charge of the government, but his despotic acts revealed his designs on the throne, and the emperor finally decreed his death (31 A.D.).

Sheridan, Mrs. Frances (1724–1766): mother of the famous dramatist, and a cultured woman of letters. Her novel, *Sydney Biddulph*, occasioned a high compliment from Johnson: "I know not, Madam, that you have a right to make your readers suffer so much."

Sheridan, Richard Brinsley (1751–1816): author of some of the finest and most popular comedies in the language, notably the *Rivals* and the *School for Scandal*. He also achieved an immense reputation as a parliamentary orator. "Whatever Sheridan has done, or chosen to do," said Byron, "has been, *par excellence*, always the best of its kind."

Somersets: a famous Whig family, which has given to England a queen and a regent of the kingdom.

Southwark: a commercial borough of London, on the southern bank of the Thames. The brewery founded by Thrale was, after his death, sold by Johnson to a firm whose name has ever since remained unchanged.

Spunging-houses: generally taverns owned by bailiffs, where arrested debtors were kept for a day, to allow time for a settlement or compromise before commitment to prison. In these houses, explains Johnson, "the bailiffs *sponge* upon" the debtors, "or riot at their cost." Johnson was arrested twice within a month, but there is no evidence that he was carried to a sponging-house. Imprisonment for debt was not abolished in England until after Macaulay's death.

Streatham: a residential suburb of London, about five miles southwest of the City, but sparsely settled in Johnson's time. The Thrales' villa disappeared in 1863.

Swift, Jonathan (1667–1745): the foremost of English prose satirists, and the "greatest original intellect in pure literature between Dryden and Wordsworth." Swift, says Gosse, "is the dominant intellectual figure of the first half of the century, as Johnson of the

second, and it is hard to deny that he is altogether greater than Johnson." His famous masterpiece, *Gulliver's Travels*, was the source of the names used in Johnson's *Parliamentary Debates* (*see* "Lilliput"). His verse, though of minor value, admitted him to the *Lives of the Poets*, but Johnson generally disparaged his merits; "if Swift," he once said, "was really the author of the *Tale of a Tub* [which he doubted], as the best of his other performances were of a very inferior merit, he should have hanged himself after he had written it."

Tempest, Tom: a character drawn by Johnson in No. 10 of the *Idler* (1758). "Tom Tempest is a steady friend to the house of Stuart. He can recount the prodigies that have appeared in the sky, and the calamities that have afflicted the nation every year from the Revolution; and is of opinion that if the exiled family had continued to reign, there would have neither been worms in our ships nor caterpillars in our trees." Johnson continues to recount his absurd beliefs. The entire paper will form entertaining reading in connection with ¶ 13.

Teutonic languages: the group of tongues derived from the dialects spoken by the old Teutons, or Germans. These languages, which include modern German, Dutch, Scandinavian (Swedish, etc.), and English, are so classed in distinction from the Romance languages or modern corruptions of Latin — Italian, Spanish, and French. English now contains many derivations from the latter group, but the basis of the language is Teutonic.

Thomson, James (1700–1748): the greatest English poet between Pope and Gray, and a prominent leader in the revolt from the formality of Pope. His poem on *The Seasons* (1730) made him famous, and his influence extended to the Continent, but a large income did not accompany his reputation, and his patrons were vacillating. His finest work is *The Castle of Indolence*, though not so popular as his *Rule Britannia*. (*See* Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*.)

Thrale, Henry (1724–1781), married Hester Lynch Salusbury (1741–1821) in 1763. Though his treatment of her was always kind, he does not seem to have appreciated her talents, and "he gave her some real cause for jealousy." They made Johnson's acquaintance in 1764, and the author was soon domesticated at Streatham. Thrale represented Southwark in Parliament from 1765 to 1780, occasionally receiving assistance from Johnson's pen in the elections. When Thrale died, in 1781: Johnson wrote: "I felt almost the last flutter of his pulse, and looked for the last time upon the face that for fifteen years had never been turned upon me but with respect and benignity."

Mrs. Thrale had become acquainted in the previous year with Gabriel Piozzi, a talented Italian musician of about her own age. Their intimacy ripened quickly into passionate love, and in 1784, with the consent of Mrs. Thrale's daughters, they were married. Johnson admitted that he had no right to resent her conduct. For a few years the couple resided in Italy, where Mrs. Piozzi wrote her lively *Anecdotes of Johnson* (1786), only less important than the work of Boswell. This was followed by her *Letters of Johnson* (1788), after Mrs. Piozzi and her husband had returned to England, where they were well received in society. Mrs. Piozzi was also the author of several other literary efforts, including many light verses. Her husband died in 1809, but she remained a prominent figure until her death, in the year when Macaulay reached his majority.

Titty: an error for *Tetty*, which Johnson used constantly, in speech and in writing, as a familiar contraction of his wife's name, *Elizabeth*.

Tooke, John Horne (1736–1812): a prominent political agitator and philologist. He was imprisoned for actively favoring the Americans during the Revolution, Johnson declaring that "they should set him in the pillory." He afterward had an amusing altercation with Boswell. His fame as a philologist rests upon his widely read *Diversions of Purley* (1786), and Johnson accepted some of his etymologies. Tooke was also distinguished for his conversational powers. (*See* Landor's *Imaginary Conversations*.)

Universities: Before the nineteenth century the only universities in England were the long famous institutions at Oxford and Cambridge,[1] which differ considerably from the American universities. The former consist of allied **colleges** (in 1730 there were 20 at Oxford), each of which constitutes a separately endowed and self-governed corporation. The relation between college and university may be likened in principle to the relation between the American state and the federal government. A student who is entered at one of the colleges becomes thereby a member of the university. The colleges give instruction and furnish lodgings and board to students, while the university holds examinations and grants degrees.

The **rulers** of a college society, or corporation, are the *master* and the *fellows*, who form a board of government and instruction. Both the fellows and the undergraduates known as *scholars* are supported by annuities from the income of the college foundations or endowments. Students who pay all their expenses, including that of the "commons," or common eating-table, are called **commoners**. Johnson was one of these, but in his day the higher class of commoners were distinguished by the title of **gentlemen**

[1] Johnson was educated at Oxford, and Macaulay at Cambridge.

commoners, and by special academic dress, various immunities, and the payment of larger fees.

Pembroke College claims Johnson as her greatest son. Late in life, Johnson described his college as "a society which for half a century has been eminent for English poetry and elegant literature." The largest and most patrician of the Oxford colleges is **Christ Church** (where, *e.g.*, King Edward VII. was educated). The square or court, to be seen in most of the colleges, is known as the *quadrangle*.

In Johnson's time there were no intercollegiate lectures, each college deeming itself adequate for its purposes. The university professors rarely lectured, for the walls were generally the sole audience. As the private tutors, or "coaches," did not become common until much later, the students depended mainly on the college tutor, who did little beyond guiding their reading. Johnson sorely needed a good tutor, for he asserted afterward that he had been "very idle and neglectful of his studies." Excepting some empty formalities, there were few or no public exercises or examinations, the degree of **Bachelor of Arts** being awarded as a matter of course, after a mere residence of thirteen weeks (and less) in each year for four years. Johnson's *total* residence, therefore, was longer than that required for a degree, but it was not spread over four years.

Virgilian: resembling the style of Virgil (70–19 B.C.), the greatest Latin poet, author of the *Æneid*. "The discriminative excellence of Virgil," says Johnson, "is grace and splendor of diction."

Walmesley, Gilbert (1680–1751): an English lawyer of considerable attainments. Many years after, in his *Lives of the Poets* (*s.v.* Edmund Smith), Johnson acknowledged his gratitude to this friend in an oft-quoted tribute to his memory.

Warburton, William, Bishop of Gloucester (1698-1779): a famous disputant and supercilious critic, who was convinced that "he would hold in the eyes of posterity much the same preëminence and isolated greatness that Samuel Johnson actually maintains." He also had his Boswell in Bishop Hurd, but the combination of Warburton and Hurd, though more learned and arrogant, is insignificant beside the combination of Johnson and Boswell. Johnson, however, like most of his contemporaries, treated Warburton with great respect, and was ever grateful for the praise referred to in the text. He did not know that the bishop afterward wrote that Johnson's *Shakespeare* showed "as much folly as malignity." But Johnson saw clearly that Warburton, "by extending his abuse, rendered it ineffectual," and he gives a discriminating estimate of the prelate in his *Life of Pope*.

Westminster Abbey: in Westminster, a suburb of London. The church was founded in 1269, and enlarged by successive monarchs. It is the burial place of numerous kings, statesmen, and scholars, while the south transept contains, in the "Poets' Corner," the tombs and memorials of many eminent men of letters, including Johnson and Macaulay.

Whitfield, George (1714–1770): founder of the sect of Calvinistic Methodists, and an eloquent open-air preacher. He was known personally to both Boswell and Johnson, though the latter would not allow much merit to his oratory. He made frequent visits to America, and died in Massachusetts. (*See* Franklin's *Autobiography*.)

Wilson, Richard (1714–1782): one of the greatest of English landscape painters. He, at first, however, devoted himself successfully to portrait-painting. It thus appears that the converse of Macaulay's statements regarding Sheridan and Wilson will not hold true.

Windham, William (1750–1810): a distinguished Whig statesman and orator, the friend of Johnson and Burke. Macaulay calls him "the finest gentleman of the age, the ingenious, the chivalrous, the high-souled Windham."

Wolsey, Cardinal (1471–1530): a famous English prelate and statesman. He rose rapidly under Henry VIII., became his right-hand favorite, and was made prime minister. It was not long, however, before he incurred the anger of his capricious sovereign, and his immense wealth and power quickly vanished. He was arrested for high treason, but died while in custody.

Wyndhams: an ancient English family, of Tory principles.

Young, Edward (1681–1765): a minor English poet, whose didactic, sepulchral *Night Thoughts* (1744) enjoyed a very wide popularity for nearly a century. Johnson (*see* Boswell's *Life*) praised it highly, and Boswell, rather lavishly. Though now comparatively neglected, it is the source of many familiar aphorisms.

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